

MACLEAN'S

TARGET: OTTAWA
Controlling guns
but not budgets

'TIS TOY SEASON
The good, the bad
and the snuggly

THE MOVIE GAME
Canadian grit vs.
American schmalz

Q&A: LOU GERSTNER
IBM's outgoing boss on
Big Blue's turnaround



IMMIGRANTS

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

WHO SHOULD GET IN?

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THE PAST VS. THE FUTURE

The face of immigration has changed—
as has our ability to define its goals.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING for an example of a thoroughly decent person who entered politics with equally good intentions, Allan Rock should rank near the top of the list. He quit a lucrative law practice in Toronto just as he was entering his peak earning years—in his 40s—to run as a Liberal candidate in the 1993 election, at a time when it seemed likely that the party might remain an opposition. In his early days in Ottawa, with his family in Toronto, Rock's only Ottawa recreation was his lunchtime, five-Solitaire game; otherwise, he spent dizzying hours studying files, held up at meetings with bureaucrats or fellow MPs, or meetings—becomingly—with a private tutor to become fluent in French. This was a guy who a lot of people saw as a future prime minister, and the fire his katana—a rational gun registry—seemed likely to win the kind of insurance among traditional Liberals that would give him a quick head start.

So it's ironic that nine years later, the fall-out from that decision to supple Rock part so far from the leadership in coming days. There was the cost for the registration program in money—was \$1.1 billion more, an opposition predicted, the final price tag for higher—in fact, more than eight times that, or nearly \$1 billion. That's an astonishing price, even for good intentions. And the debate over gun registration, as Calgary Herald Chief Martin Bergman reports (page 36), all but turned an immigration bar overboard of distrust in attitudes between rural and urban Canadians. Perhaps city residents, like Rock (or me), the idea of anyone other than a police officer packing a gun seems a dangerous diversion. It is in rural areas, however, are part of life—and you're likely to find safer on a small-town main street than on the main streets of an urban centre.

That's one of the dilemmas between rural and urban Canada: Another to choose of immigration—who gets in, and what our expectations are in setting criteria for new Canadians. Our city streets are filled with people of different colours, races and back-

grounds, our rural communities remain largely white. Immigrants gravitate to big cities, where they find other of similar backgrounds, rather than small towns. Since immigration is our prime motor for population growth, our cities are getting overcrowded, while many rural communities are dying.

That raises the question of whether a willingness to settle in a smaller community, at least for a fixed period of time, should be part of the criteria we set for newcomers. After all, we already look at things like language skills and professional qualifications in evaluating would-be Canadians—is this would simply be one more element in the mix. But as Mary Joann reports (page 38) the enormous surrounding immigration policy on all sides are so intense that they impede the ability to rationally discuss new ideas. Author and journalist Daniel Hoffmann, whose cover on refugee policy (page 38) is part of our cover package, notes that Canada's doors have been on this topic—and frequently finds himself embroiled in controversy.

The face of immigration has changed dramatically—and likely will continue to all white faces on our cover photo, taken of new arrivals in the last 10 years. So here we report on—or, more precisely, we shy away from them. Do we want to attract immigrants for their economic benefit, cultural enrichment, or for humanitarian reasons? Is an ability to adapt to a new environment a necessary condition for refugee status? Is an impoverished country of equal importance to, say, a brain surgeon from a G-8 country? These lines and/or red lines fence off our own answers—even as the opening and closing of Canada's doors has to accept our most important forms of social engineering.

Anthony Wilson-Smith

antonw@maclean.ca is comment on the Editor's Letter

MACLEAN'S

Editor: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Managing Editor: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Deputy Editor: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Editorial Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

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Art Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

Art Assistant: Anthony Wilson-Smith

How to Reach Us

By e-mail: antonw@maclean.ca

By fax: (416) 967-1234

By mail: 100 King Street West, Toronto, ON M5X 1C5

By phone: (416) 967-1234

By telex: (416) 967-1234

By telegram: (416) 967-1234

By radio: (416) 967-1234

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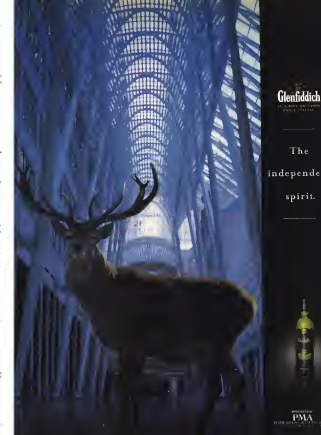
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Our self-loathing differentiates us most markedly. Americans celebrate their regional variances while Canadians use them as political weapons. —JANE EMMETT, *Editor*

All is vanity
ling, medicine, romance—"You're so vain"
(Cover, Dec. 2) could not have come at a bet-
ter time. It was a much-needed change to all
the news of the day. I laughed all the way
through the article. Wides to James Dean
can bring a little levity and laughter
into our lives.
Nancy Rye, Toronto

A guy who is well-dressed is self-absorbed?
What kind of message is that for guys and
what a double standard. It seems to me,
however, that recent standards for men's
appearance have deteriorated immensely,
but standards for women have increased. Tall
eyes and buggy butt-showing pants on a
guy is no fashion but pretty much accept-
able. Give me a break.
Sherry Klotz, Denver, Ark.

The social revolutions of the past 50 years
have liberated us from conformities, sen-
sors, nation and a host of other once bind-
ing rules, making us arguably the freest peo-
ple in history. And yet we are reminded
by editors of given age men who look re-
frid and the fashion industry to tell them
what to wear, how to get their hair and what
they ought to smell like. It's enough to
make one believe that the cynical assas-
sins of the Old Regime were right in say-
ing what the great mass of common-folk-
really were is someone to tell them what
to do. How sad.
Mitt Hepfies, Courtney BC.

Now more than ever, men are undergoing
the same physical treatments to reach the
top and have very physical appeal as women
have for many years. Thank you for taking
an issue that many are concerned about
(physical appearance) and digging just a lit-
tle deeper than some would have wanted to.
Joseph Van Der Bosch, Intermountain, Minn.

How and when did young John Trini go
army? (A brief but story of fame, "Cover,"
Dec. 2) His parents, like astounding cinema,
deserve better from their son, the producer



of years of wringing and wringing, but far
wiser" to John can indulge himself by thur-
sively spending \$48 (plus tip) on a haircut
to satisfy his own like vanity? What is this
world coming to?

Michael Suter, Minneapolis, Minn.

Looking for Osama

"The invisible man," (Toronto, Dec. 2) Jeo-
pards the belief that Osama bin Laden is
hiding "in the mountains of northern Paki-
stan, a remote, lawless region dominated
by fundamentalist Muslim tribesmen with
a strong hatred of America and a history of

sheltering people fleeing from the Pakistani
government." This exaggeration does an
injustice to the large friendly Muslim popu-
lation in the region who follow their spiri-
tual leader, the Aga Khan, a respected in-
ternational philanthropist with a highly de-
veloped sense of social justice and region
stability. These people are driven into the
conflict region in Afghanistan and do not
local removal of Pakistan. However, their lives
and values are well-kept from the Taliban
and al-Qaeda fundamentalism.
Jane Vincent-Hewitt, London, Ont.

Canada's economic future

Peter C. Newman's claim that opening
NAFTA will lead to political union with the
United States ("Down of free trade," Col-
umbus, Dec. 2) is just as preposterous as the
claim in Mel Harris's latest book that some
of the proponents of closer economic in-
tegration are agents of the CIA. Newman
chose NAFTA as a cautionary union, which it
is not. NAFTA is a free trade area. The suc-
cess of the FTA and NAFTA have created their
own set of new problems: complex rules-of-
origin, slight differences in health, safety
and other standards still result in border
frictionless costs in the range of three to
five per cent of our bilateral trade. Fur-
thermore, the uncertainties of the border
mean that Canada is losing out to the U.S.
as terms of new foreign investment, if 90
per cent of production is to be shipped across
the border, too many investors are choos-
ing to locate on the other side of the border.
The United States does not want a political
union with Canada any more than we do
want them. However, proponents of deeper
economic integration would welcome a seri-
ous and their business facts and not distortions.

John J. Wills, visiting Fulbright Scholar, Canadian
Studies Centre, Michigan State University-East
Lansing, Mich.

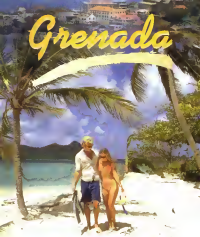
There is a glaring lack of commitment to the
Canadian identity and, indeed, Canadian
sovereignty among those on the front bench
of the federal Liberals and the senior officers
of the government of Alberta. Action groups
have certainly formed the dialogue well but
have moved themselves off to the side. Out-
side the circle they effectively serve only as
the kids day that sign at the heads of their
financial giant. In the words of Mel Harris,
"It is too late to save Canada."
G. Jane Walker, Edmonton



AS READERS DEBATED OUR NOV. 25 ISSUE ON WHETHER CANADA WAS BECOMING more American, 20-year-old

Marc-André Desbois, champion of *Stu Adler*
Qui... wrote about people of his generation
who already feel like Americans. "I look at
my country and I am slightly ashamed!" he
said. Canadians boast of their health care
and gun control, but "health care sucks
(sorry for my been expression). And gun
control? We have street gangs, we have
organized crime." When he finishes a
degree in multimedia design, Desbois
hopes to work in California in
Australia.

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Big O's burden

One thing I have learned in my 75 years of residence in Alberta is never to trust any premier to fairly and truthfully represent me. The current case of climate change and the Kyoto accord is a classic example of that ("What Kyoto will mean to you," Cover, Nov. 13). From the carbon days of my M.B.A. work in the oil industry, in Alberta and abroad, those asserted any doubt that, one day, the hammer would fall on Big Oil's misdeeds appeared. Many of the residents of this oil province also must have anticipated this. Yes, whether reported in this week's issue of our local paper, linking Canada's signing of the Kyoto protocol to loss of our energy? The only possible (and ongoing) loss of the country's self-determination to the south, and that worthy regime has rejected Kyoto altogether – because it, like the one that rules this province, is ruled by Big Oil. My brother, who has resided after 36 years with the weather service, remembers when the first snow clouds began appearing over Taberna in the early '70s. He and at the time that meteorological scientists knew that a fundamental change in the planet's weather patterns appeared to be taking place. We now have proof, all around us, that we are exacerbating the global warming phenomenon. Surely continue to flourish here in Alberta, our premier – the great big government spending hundreds of thousands of somebody's dollars to convince his flock that, as with the health care crisis, he has a better idea. Don't take our corporate citizen's word for it. Thank for journalism.

KIM L. LIND, Pincher Creek, Alta.

During the National Energy Program in the 1980s, a common bumper sticker in Alberta read, "Let the experts decide for you in the field." You don't see that now, but I won't do it. It is because that is precisely the job to be announced death of the Liberal's plan to meet their Kyoto targets.

HOWARD MCKIN, Calgary

Here we go again. The one-too-gang in Ottawa is trying to impress the other world group thinkers with their headlong rush to get a Bad Aid on this planet's latest recognized ailment. They are going to "fix" the problem with a solution that will not megabucks and do little to address the real trouble, which is "too many people."

GOE ALLEN, Cambridge, Ont.

THE MAIL

Offering support

In "We and the Bush/they/us" (Essay, Nov. 25), Nafiseh Parva complains that the U.S. abandoned Afghanistan to its fate after the Soviet wanted government was defeated. She complains that the U.S. is again abandoning Afghanistan after the defeat of the Taliban. When she asks for in the article is for the U.S. to install independence, freedom and democracy. No country can install those in another country. Only Afghans can create a country that is independent and free, and others can at most offer support.

STEVE P. SWICK, Calgary

Similarities and differences

I was in Vancouver a few months ago and I could see similarities between Canada and the United States [America here, in that we have?]. Cover, Nov. 25]. I could also see how different they are. Canada has its own call, its own history and its own accent. I went to learn English and, indeed, consider myself a Canadian English speaker. Canadians should think better of their culture and principles, to be themselves, original, and show there is a place in the world where English is spoken with peace and love.

Tabiana Pereira da Rosa, Porto Alegre, Brazil

I agree there is little to differentiate English-Canadian culture from American culture. But that's not in the same boat! In fact, if that's the case, we were more open to learning French, reading in bilingual websites, watching some of the good movies and TV shows we produce, you would differentiate yourselves from our southern neighbours.

WILLIAM MURPHY, Lacombe, Que.

US journalist Clifford Krauss brought up a maddening question: "can't one be a patriotic Canadian and be critical of Canada, too?" ("Risk search," Cover/Columns, Nov. 25). Well, apparently not. John Robson said would recently have our democracy seem to have lost its support of recovery – the heated debate among citizens with strong points of view. We have become arm and overly politically correct. That our country is twofold, and no one seems to have seen it as a union of where we're going. If Canada is going to continue to be an example to the rest of the world, we have to find ways to talk about a lot of uncomfortable issues, like religion and advocacy.

ALAN R. GIBSON, Vancouver



C. GRIFFIN

It appears that Clifford Krauss's difficulty is caused by constantly viewing us through the confines of an American telescope. His disappointment that Canadians do not flock to Ottawa in search of gold and patriotism is understandable, but many of us are very uncomfortable with the classic "guide and patronize" that he is used to. Canadians generally do not feel we have a God given right to export and impose our beliefs on others.

DAVID ALLEN, St. Lawrence, Que.

Multiple associations

Tom reported that Montreal lawyer Harry Bloomberg was found guilty in New York City of conspiracy and falsifying business records in a "pump and dump" stock scheme and that he "was once with the Business Development Bank of Canada" (Puzzles, Dec. 2). Mr. Bloomberg was never an employee of the Bank. He was appointed to the board of directors more than 15 years ago and left the board seven years ago. He has served a long list of companies, academic associations, hospitals, charitable organizations, etc., in some capacity and yet the Business Development Bank was the only one that you mentioned. The BDC does not appreciate the insinuation.

ANNE MCKINLEY, Vice President, Public Affairs, Business Development Bank of Canada, Montreal

Lessons of war

Several years ago, a friend asked me to go on a golfing picnic to North Carolina with two of his friends. One was Ron Brown. Although our conversation touched on many subjects, not one did Ron mention the terrible ordeal he and two buddies suffered in

October 1943. I didn't know until I read the article "Three who faced death" (The Montreal Star, Nov. 25). I had missed it enough time in the Second World War. I was in four months and lay for seven hours on the damp North ground until I was picked up by the stretcher bearers. Sometimes I wish I had a bit more for myself, but when I read about the hardship those young men endured, I felt positively ashamed. There is no doubt that was, in all aspects, a shattering hell, but when it is over we should, as Ron Brown apparently did, forget and get on with our lives, trying to do what we can to make the world a better place.

PAUL HARRIS, London, Ont.

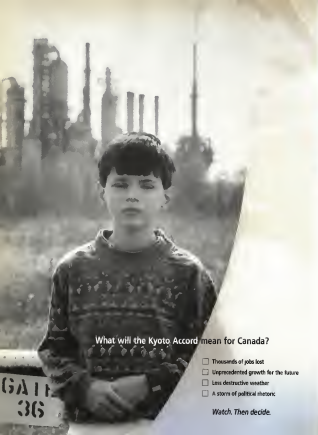
In their mid-1950s, latter-day analysis of the "disputed" July 1944 attack on Normandy Ridge in Normandy ("The Mail," Nov. 25), Barry Copp and Mike Bertheloff suggest that Mike, Phil Griffin had the option of agreeing or disagreeing with Bill. Gen. Bill McGrath's order, had agreed with them, led to a needless and senseless attack as a result, and therefore "no one ever considered recommending him for a Victoria Cross." Griffin was given an order and he didn't have the luxury or the time to deliver on his orders. Many of the 1,351 Victoria Crosses awarded since its institution in 1856 were won by gallant men engaged in hopeless, doomed and "ill-fated" actions.

JAMES GORDON, Vancouver, B.C.

A source of hydrogen

The response to your Nov. 11 cover story on Kyoto emissions includes two interesting and complementary letters ("The Mail," Nov. 25). Explaining that hydrogen must be produced before it can be used as an energy source, David Corrie writes, correctly. "Unless the primary energy source is non-polluting, the benefits of hydrogen fuel will be an illusion." Morgan Brown describes well the benefits of nuclear energy as "a very reasonable source of energy without using our space, land and water resources." It follows that nuclear energy could produce hydrogen by electrolysis without adding significantly to greenhouse gases or other forms of pollution. Recent advances make it reasonable to expect that nuclear energy can produce electricity cheaply and sustainably. The problem of waste disposal is solved by deep geological deposits.

E. A. McMillan, Toronto



What will the Kyoto Accord mean for Canada?

- ☐ Thousands of jobs lost
- ☐ Unprecedented growth for the future
- ☐ Less destructive weather
- ☐ A storm of political rhetoric

Watch. Then decide.

MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



FIGURING OUT THE QUESTIONS

If not for a prank, Mary Jandigan might never have become an award-winning journalist. "A friend asked me as a ruse to help her with an article for the university newspaper," explains Maclean's national correspondent for public policy (above). "I tried it and enjoyed it, which led me to journalism school."

The 28-year Maclean's veteran, who wrote the cover story on immigration for this week's issue, says journalism is a true education. "I'm constantly reminded of how complex most issues are. And that realization pushes me to start asking questions."

Before writing this week's cover story, Jandigan says she didn't fully appreciate how Canada's immigration policy works. "I'd always taken other people's pronouncements at face value. But that's not the way to go — you have to figure out the questions for yourself."

Jandigan, who says she would have been a "constitutional lawyer living in a garret" if journalism hadn't beckoned, says she enjoys playing "what if?...I like figuring out what would happen if policies changed. If immigration doubled, for instance, how would it affect Canada's labour force and population?"

Jandigan sees her job as anticipating issues before they emerge as major news stories. "I try to flag things that are still around the corner as I can explain to readers why we should pay attention to them."

To that end, she keeps as many issues as possible on her radar screen. "I watch for tiny news stories and pay close attention to items that say a new committee will be meeting, for instance. And I'm lucky that that after all these years, I have lots of good contacts."

Watch for more stories by Mary Jandigan in future issues of Maclean's.

For further information, contact behindthescenes@maclean.ca

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A/Alvin Taylor
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a five-year moratorium
Kader with a lobby law
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Caring Canada U.S.
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adian corporation.

Law | Patents and rodents

Does a genetically engineered mouse qualify for the same patent protection as, say, a hand-held computer? Not so far as the Supreme Court of Canada is concerned. In so long anticipated, intellectually and morally charged ruling, the court decided that higher life forms—such as Harvard University's so-called *OncoMouse*, which was at the heart of the case—cannot be patented. The decision was far from resounding, however, with the court's 5-4 split underscoring how divisive the patent battle has been.

Harvard scientists created the *OncoMouse* in the 1980s by genetically altering it so make it prone to developing cancer for medical research. But based on the ancient language of Canada's 19th-century *Patent Act*, the Supreme Court judged the Harvard

mouse to be neither a "manufacture" nor a "composition of matter." It threw the question of ownership power higher life forms back to Parliament. There, Industry Minister Allan Rock promised Canadians will first be consulted, as will the Canadian Biotechnology Advisory Committee, before a decision is made on reversing the law.

Canada now stands almost alone—and biotechnology isn't happy. The United States, Japan and much of Europe have long conceded patent rights over the *OncoMouse*. Some critics now worry about brain drain as Canadian biotech companies may consider heading for more favorable jurisdictions. Between 1997 and 2001, the number of such firms in Canada increased from 227 to more than 400. Annual revenues reported by the sector's public companies now exceed \$1.5 billion, a 160 per cent increase.

A genetically altered mouse (*Onco*) is still a mouse, according to the Supreme Court.

Quote of the week: "My choice would be simple. My first commitment is to Albertans. I know that this government will not turn its back on Alberta, nor the energy sector."

Health Minister ANNE MCLELLAN hinting that she may resign if the Alberta's economy is damaged by the Kipke accord on climate change.

Rescue | Quick responses keep Harcourt alive

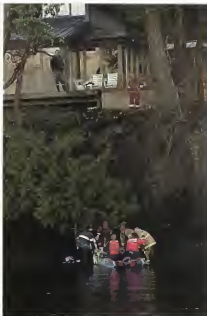
It was 29 years ago that Mike Harcourt and his wife Beadie bought property on the tiny B.C. Gulf Island of North Pender. The waterfront cottage they built was a refuge during his six years as Vancouver mayor and 18 years in provincial politics, including a bruising term as New Democratic Party premier. "North Pender became our comfort from the storm," he wrote in his memoirs after resigning as premier in 1996. The cottage, he said, was "our salvation."

Beadie was working in the garden on Nov. 30 when she checked on her husband, who was clearing a wooden-deck bath close to a 20-metre-high cliff overlooking Navy Channel. Accustomed the family lair used him as the anchor of the next moments. "After spotting Mike on the rocks below, and face down in water, Beadie reached him, unable to turn Mike over and then return to call for emergency medical aid."

She made a difficult scramble down to the water, waded in and rolled over the manhole surface three Harcourt, retaining his breathing. Her 911 call brought 10 members of the volunteer North Pender Island Fire Department to the scene. Harcourt, 59, who is believed to have fallen off the wooden deck after slipping on wet leaves, may have been spared from total paralysis because the trained fire crew arrived, correctly, he had a serious spinal injury. The Chief Steve Windsor says Harcourt was moved by boat to avoid the risk of further injury by hauling him up the cliff. A Coast Guard Zodiac boat was on scene within 10 minutes, says Windsor. "Everything fell nicely into place."

Harcourt was airlifted to Vancouver General Hospital where a surgical team, led by Dr. Marcel Dvorak, operated for seven hours, decompressing and stabilizing the damaged spinal cord. Since then Harcourt has regained some strength and movement in his legs and arms. It is too early for doctors to predict if he will walk again, but it is certain he faces months of rehabilitation.

The signs are encouraging, says Rick Hansen, the spinal research advocate. "He's probably one of the best spinal cord cases in North America," Hansen adds that Harcourt, as mayor, offered invaluable support. "When I was this young, given what their fathers with the crazy idea of walking around



the world." Harcourt was speaking from Ottawa last week where he lobbied for a federal strategy to improve the quality of life for those with spinal injuries, and to work for a cure.

Harcourt's rescue owes much to medical advances and a skilled community response, but it began with his intensely private wife. He'd called her "my inspiration." That day, she was his salvation.



His wife Beadie was first on the scene after the former B.C. premier fell, then the actions of skilled volunteer firefighters likely saved him from suffering even worse injury.

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IMMIGRANTS

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

WHO SHOULD GET IN?

CAN WE TELL THEM WHERE TO LIVE AND WHAT TO DO?

BY MARY JANIGAN

STELLA RAYMUNDO'S scrapbook opens with her first hesitant approach to the Canadian embassy in Manila in 1999. There are meticulous records of their exchanges of letters and forms. It ends with a single photograph of her and her husband and their three children at Winnipeg airport on Oct. 22, 2001. It's, she says, "a fulfillment in our life" to be landed immigrants selected by Manitoba. She is still working on the happily ever after part of the tale.

And no one should tell you it's easy. In the Philippines, she was a computer hardware teacher. Now she is a customer service representative at National Money Mart. In the Philippines, her husband Richard, 35, was a computer technician. Now he works on a

grove factory assembly line. The two are taking English courses. Next year they will upgrade their computer skills. They travel at Canada's generous social programs. They have bought a van—and they are saving for a house. But sometimes, although Richard has nearby relatives, they get lonely. "We go out then with our kids and try not to remember everything," says Stella, 38. Then she adds, "We are doing OK. We are just trying to make it, step by step."

Immigration may be the romanticized ideal of Canada Past. But in the 21st century, it remains an unsettling, difficult and not-always rewarding experience—for the migrant, the host country and the sending nation. Around the globe, millions of peo-

ple are on the move—as refugees or scrambling economic migrants or people joining relatives. Or they are highly skilled workers, part of an international elite that fits among nations. At the worldwide level, many industrialized nations begin to shrink, countries such as Germany, which does not have an open immigration program, are worried about maintaining even current standards of living, especially in rapidly aging societies, says Dee Johnson, secretary general of the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. "There is going to be a real fight among nations for the best human capital."

For the sheer size of its intake, Canada is

in a class by itself. Last year, it absorbed more than a quarter of a million permanent residents, well above the planned intake of 250,000 to 275,000. In late October, virtually without debate, Immigration Minister Denis Cochrane raised the target Canada plans to accept anywhere from 220,000 to 245,000 immigrants next year. The other major nations with large organized resettlement programs, the United States and Australia, take only half as many per capita as Canada.

The high numbers are a mixed blessing. Last year, 77 per cent of newcomers settled in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto, more than 125,000 settled in Toronto alone. Fully 44 per cent did not speak English or



THEN AND NOW: The Filipinos leaving the Philippines, and in Winnipeg today (top)

French. Such pressure strains settlement services, including language courses, housing and the environment.

For the immigrants themselves, it is an

often difficult transition. Among recent arrivals, poverty levels are high—and average wages remain drastically low. Almost 60 per cent of adult immigrants in 2000 had a postsecondary degree, compared with 45 per cent of the existing population. But so the composition of the immigrant group has spread beyond traditional mid-20th-century sources in Europe—16 per cent came from China alone last year—Canada has become less adept at recognizing their skills. The waste of talent is shocking. "The immigration system needs to be tuned on its head and revamped," says B. C. MP Keith Martin, a physician who has seen the bureaucratic roadblocks that keep doctors from credentialed border to practice in Prince George,



6 WE ARE DOING OK HERE. WE ARE JUST TRYING TO MAKE IT, STEP BY STEP. 7

Kuznetsov and Predrag Jovanovic in 1984. Below, and below in Toronto, with four-year-old Stefan



where physician shortages are severe.

But the huge size of the intake has provoked the most debate. That fall, three bodies have argued that Canada's taking too many people. Journalist Daniel Hoffman (co-author of the best-selling book, *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*) senior fellow Murray Gillson and National Post columnist Denis Gosselin are all provocative and almost certainly too pessimistic. All have drawn fire from interest groups who have accused the real issues with emotional arguments.

Because the debate is emotional, are we setting the right level? After all, immigration should only be one tool to meet labour force and population needs. All industrialized societies are aging. Immigration cannot solve that problem; the required numbers would be too great to absorb. Immigration also forces a large proportion of the Canadian workforce: more than half are foreign born. And someone between 2011

and 2016, if current levels continue, all labour force growth will come from immigration, because baby boomers will start retiring and births rates are low.

But the labour force would not be growing in 2011 if we halved the number of immigrants, according to projections done by Maclean's, by McMaster University economist Bryan Spencer (see chart). Economists are also starting to ask if Canada has a major across-the-board shortage of skilled workers today. "Immigration is not a silver bullet for skill shortages," says Queen's University economist Alan Green. "That approach is dead."

IN HIS CENTRE (Clockwise from top left) Hil, Immigration Minister Denis Gosselin, a talking about his predecessor Clifford Sifton. An interior minister in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's government from 1906 to 1908, Sifton lured thousands of settlers into the

prairies with the promise of cheap land. So, while reading University of Alberta history professor David Hall's biography of Sifton, The Young Napoleon, Gosselin had an idea: why not lure skilled workers to less crowded areas with the promise of a secure job? Why not fast-track that application? Why not work with the provinces and states and business and professional groups to make sure the new arrivals had welcome and their skills are recognized? And why not insist that these immigrants, in turn, stay in those areas, effectively on contract with temporary work permits for three to five years, to ensure they put down roots? Then they could confidently apply for landed status. "These put together a vision," Gosselin says. "I am looking to get what we need."

The scheme may work—although it won't be easy. Canada divides its immigration intake into three categories. There were almost 153,000 economic immigrants in 2010.



Reinhart and Wang at their wedding (right). Reinhart is the Austrian Alps before moving to Canada

(That number includes accompanying family members, only 43 per cent—63,700—were actually qualifying workers.) There were 22,800 refugees, and there were 66,000 people who were accepted because they were the parents or children or spouses or fiancées or grandmothers of residents. There were also 2,300 chosen to "bolster" making a grand total (not rounded) of 250,346.

The minister wants to increase the proportion of skilled workers. And he has managed formidable odds. Last June, a new immigration law took effect. The selection system now gives huge weight to education or trade skills, language proficiency and "adaptability," which includes the spouse's education. The 1.6 bombs were criticized because of their high standards. But Canada's labour markets are very softgoing. In 2004, only 30 per cent of new jobs will require less than high school. More than 70 per cent will need some post-secondary schooling, such

drivers are global positioning systems.

At well, over the past four years, Ottawa has signed selection deals with eight of the 10 provinces (Ontario has not signed, while Quebec has picked its immigrants for decades.) That "provincial nominee" group is a very province class only 1,124 people, including dependants, last year. But it is the worst of the future—if only because it will first accept immigrants who are not needed. "We see a slow growing province," says Manitoba Immigration Minister Lucy Barrett, "and disposes of with people with skills in short supply, such as cybermarketing."

Gosselin wants to focus on attachment to place. In October, he and his provincial colleagues agreed to figure out a system for temporary work permits. The work would involve benefits such as health care. But they would be obliged to stay in the jobs or areas where they were accepted for three to five years. If they moved without good reason,

they would have to leave Canada.

Such permits are now issued to visiting workers ranging from foreign musicians to Caribbean harvesters. Gosselin clearly foresees a time when provinces will nominate candidates for specific jobs—and Ottawa will issue a temporary permit after health and security checks. In the meantime, on its own, Ottawa may start to dole out those permits to skilled applicants for landed status. This usage will likely be challenged as a violation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. "But this can work," says Toronto lawyer Peter Rabin, who has just examined the proposal for the C.D. Howe Institute. "A lot of people are talking about this as a brave new world. It isn't. We are taking an existing system and using it to solve actual and skill shortage problems."

But it is almost if Gosselin's exactly how big is the skill shortage? Gosselin says optimistically that "in the next five years, we

IN LATE OCTOBER, VIRTUALLY WITHOUT DEBATE, MINISTER GOSSELIN RAISED CANADA'S IMMIGRATION TARGET FOR NEXT YEAR

HOW MANY DO WE NEED?

This year an estimated 256,000 immigrants and refugees will come to Canada. Some say the country is accepting too many people, others not enough. Since October 1, we've seen more projections. Maclean's asked Bryan Spencer, a McMaster University economics professor, to calculate what would happen in future years to the population and the labour force if the annual immigration level remained unchanged, if it was halved to 125,000 or doubled to 375,000.

Year	Canada's pop. (millions)	Pop. annual growth	Population annual growth
2001	31.6	+0.20%	+0.30%
2011	32.8	+0.21	+0.31
Halved	33.8	+0.20	+0.40
Doubled	36.3	+0.21	+0.32
2021	33.4	+0.23	0.50
Halved	37.2	+0.20	+0.64
Doubled	38.3	+0.21	+0.79

Source: Projections based on Statistics Canada's 2006 census

BRING THEM TO NEW BRUNSWICK

You're an entrepreneur from Ontario looking for a new home in Canada, one that provides an entry into the old North American business market as well as a good, safe place to raise your children? Should you go to the industrial melting pots of Toronto, to Quebec and Montreal or to the working-class, largely rural east coast city of Saint John—where you can be as close as a copy of the *Chronicling* *World*?

Bart's Scott, 30-year-old, got a hint to the St. John's Industrial Centre in a commercial strip on the outskirts of Saint John's east end. There

if all goes right is a brand new 13,000-sq-ft building, the first of what he expects to be the same one—five Chinese-owned businesses will be doing everything from making car parts to crafting fine furniture. Negotiations are also under way with another 12 Chinese businesses to open up shop there. "We want immigrants to think of our province as a place that is open and welcoming," says Yu in Beih, the Chinese minister in charge of business development.

Fortunately if you have the right skill set, bringing immigration is one of the best of the "government plan" that Premier Bernard Lord's province released last February. The idea is simple: attract foreign entrepreneurs who will bring their own overseas connections and a flow

them to add a little life to the old local economy. New Brunswick is one of the few provinces where it's not taking advantage of the massive agreements that most provinces have signed with Ottawa, giving them a greater say in choosing new comers. "Toronto and Vancouver are too crowded," says Yu. Despite being 72, a university student who moved to Saint John last year with his parents under the program. They owned a construction company in China and are still working what kind of business to start. "New Brunswick is small but we see many opportunities," says Lu.

With the program less than a year old, the province isn't sure how many individuals have actually relocated to New Brunswick and been attracted. The bright spot is undoubtedly

Scott, who, since, according to St. John's, a Toronto lawyer and a smallholder in the dairy sector. 30 to 35 people—the owners of the five businesses, their employees and family members—have immigrated from southern China. "At first the Chinese people we talk to about New Brunswick are very negative," says Lu. "But once they come over and have a look they change their minds." Others have too, including a group of overseas information technology professionals who now live in Saint John's, MB, and work for McCain Foods Ltd. Moreover they claim, the newcomers are helping for the same thing: a sustainable business environment and welcoming community. And hopefully, someone will open a new restaurant.

John DeMott

The English Club in Toronto's St. James Town helps newcomers find time to adjust.

will be a deficit of one million skilled workers." But there's no evidence of this gap, St. James Canada has no such figure. Industry Canada primarily predicts a shortage of 58,000 skilled workers by 2010. Labour economist David Card, who tracks cross-border differences at the University of California at Berkeley, sees little sign of a major Canadian shortage, noting that skilled wages would have risen sharply if there was one. Adds economist Green: "There is no rational basis for that figure of one million."

Canada does face skill shortages in key areas. The Canadian Nursing Advisory Committee reports a dire need for nurses. Development of Alberta's oilfields is hindered by a lack of heavy-equipment operators. Immigrants do fill gaps. Software engineer Kowalski and his wife arrived in October 1994, from Tlapacalpan. "Within two weeks of arriving to look, I had a job," she says. "There was a need then for software engineers. And I was very ambitious." Today she is a project manager at a Toronto firm. The two have bought a house—and they have a four-year-old son. "I believe I am good for Canada," the adds, "and Canada has let us realize our dreams."

BUT IS IT WISE to rely so heavily on an immigration to meet such labour needs? Coderevna wants to raise the annual intake to one per cent of Canada's 31.4 million pop-



ulation to solve our labour problems. As the United Nations reports, the aging of the population is irreversible, with the young population of the past unlikely to occur again. There are now five Canadians between 15 and 64 for every person who is 65 and over. By 2050, those numbers will have fallen to two to one. It would require huge flows to keep the current ratio. The U.S. would have to 10 times its current intake. [The U.S. aspect did not consider Canada's

residents to get accreditation. Still, from author of *Who Gets In*, points out that the baby-boom kids, the 'meh' of 65 million people born between 1980 and 1995, are just starting into the labour force. "This is the wrong time," he says, "to increase immigration because you want those extra boomers to have an easy entry."

When Anna Gromszka arrived in Canada and last November child of 1992, she needed a job. She spoke Polish and Ger-

man of Canada said the reason allowing \$4.1 billion to \$5.9 billion in annual income because it does not properly credit the skills of more than 540,000 Canadians—including more than 144,000 people with foreign credentials. "If we do not get immigrant settlement right," warns Andrew Jackson, senior economist at the Canadian Labour Congress, "the whole labour market is not going to work at potential."

New immigrant workers are not finding as easily well. Jackson says that immigrants who arrived after 1985 worked 14 fewer weeks and earned 30 per cent less than other Canadians in 1998. Productivity may also be a factor: about 60 per cent of recent immigrants are visible minorities.

But skills recognition is a critical problem. Ottawa has grumbled about professional organizations to streamline the accreditation process. The results remain decidedly mixed. Two months ago, the Canadian Council of Professional Regulators adopted recognition of foreign credentials as its "top priority." The Canadian Medical Association once defended "I got my license and you do not get by the first hurdle, you are angry," says CMA president Dr. Dana Hanson. "It is not because of the standards. It is because you come here with a false expectation." The CMA has suggested that foreign doctors take tests at Canadian embassies to help assess their skills.

Professionals must jump through endless hoops. When physiotherapist Jaeger Reinhardt met Patricia Wong on a B.C.



Professionals with staff at the Aero World Trade Agency in Halifax, and in 2002.



in 1992, says Coderevna. "So it is a disaster. You still have some little kingdoms." His colleague, Human Resources Minister Joe Stort, is also forthright: "Academics better ways and faster ways of doing things," she says. "There have got to be. It cannot be each-way more than what we have got now." She says professional associations could perhaps draw up lists of accredited institutions.

Lack of English or French can also hurt. In the gritty area of Toronto's St. James Town, women from Russia, Pakistan and many other nations gather for English classes, young children in tow. Then, Ottawa gives English training to new arrivals, but those classes have limited day care—and they involve long hours and regular attendance. So the English Club—which is largely staffed by volunteers—struggles to fill that gap. The women's group with each other what to do if there is an emergency, how to return goods to a supermarket. "We had a woman

intrude. "It was difficult but I had to get used to it," he says, "I had no other place to go."

It is the very difference of immigrants that brings prosperity. In a new study, four academics found a strong correlation between the size of the immigrant community in a city and its creative population, its high-tech employment and the proportion of people with a bachelor's degree or higher. "One way of looking at this is to say there is a direct link between immigration and prosperity," says University of Toronto economic geographer professor Marc Melitz. "Another way is that the presence of newcomers indicates opportunity. Probably both are true. And both are important."

So what do we do? We must embrace immigration for what it brings. But we surely shouldn't increase immigration without a full debate. We cannot tell camps people until we do a better job of integrating those who are already coming. In fact, until

CANADA IS ALREADY FAILING MANY NEW ARRIVALS—including more than 344,000 people with unrecognized foreign credentials

utilization as soon as possible. What would be the effect? Remarkably, Druzin does not release its projections. But the data crunched by McMaster's Sperre show that even if half the current numbers, in three decades the labour force would be declining only by slightly more than half a percentage point. This is not catastrophic. Between 2004 and 2030, the population of the European Union is expected to drop 10 per cent. Canada could bring its immigration rate down to 1.5 per cent levels and still do well.

And if the music men, where are we going to take those people? The OECD warns that too much immigration would slow developing nations of vital workers, especially in education and health. Even if we could do that,

The OECD says developed nations should use immigration to only part of the answer they should also make their retirement and social security workers' skills and have more people into the job market.

There is little evidence that immigration harms existing workers. According to a OECD survey, there appears to be no link between immigration and unemployment. And new arrivals have "very slight" impact on wages. A 10 per cent increase in the proportion of immigrants reduces native wages by at most one per cent. But many people does not economically mean more money. Economist Green warns that skilled immigrants could keep their wages relatively low—and reduce the incentive among

men—but little English. In the skilled medical nurse took a job in a German town. Today, she is still struggling. She has taken medical courses at McMaster. She must now English courses next month—which she will struggle with her full-time waitress job at a Toronto athletic club. Eight months ago, she sent for records from her school, her former workplace and the Polish accreditation institute. When they finally reply, it will likely take her 30 months to return. Improbable, she blames herself. "I was a very good nurse," Gromszka, 35, says sadly. "But I have had to start from the beginning and it is so hard."

Canada is already filling many new arrivals. In a recent report, the Conference

on Economic Development and Trade says: "In 1998, he was a German tourist. They married in 2000—and he became a landed immigrant last May." To his dismay, the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapists Regulations has warned him that he probably will not be accepted if he makes the necessary application for accreditation. He has German colleagues in Vancouver who have failed in that struggle. So now he works as a gardener. "It is not worst to sound ridiculous because I am a great person," he says. "But this is the biggest problem I have. It makes sense to have standards but this professional. It has really gotten to me."

For once, the government may be further ahead. "I contacted a doctor from Harry who came in 1977 and was able to practice only

when child got married because he could not read the regulations in the Irish," says founder Ruth O'Connell. "If you are a woman with young kids and you do not speak the language and you are frightened by a new culture, you can become very isolated."

A WEEK AFTER he arrived in Halifax by himself with a single suitcase and \$30, Jerry Bragatzakis had a job with a local travel agency. Nearly 30 years later, he operates an agency, employs five people and generates \$3 million in annual sales. He was a Ukrainian refugee of Indian descent in a British camp when Canadian officials recruited him. And though Bragatzakis was lonely at first, he and his wife Rita now have a lively circle of

contacts can dispense immigration far more evenly across the nation, we should probably turn that huge intake. There are too many people swamping the three biggest cities—and the strain shows in the distant pockets of poverty dotted across the urban landscape. But we cannot even have a proper debate until Ottawa decides to release its analyses. Canadian doctors to know do populations and labour forces have to keep growing forever? Are skills shortages so huge that we are abandoning in at least two million more newcomers by 2010, while the echo began to work? It is a choice that immigration built this nation. But that is our heritage. So Ottawa must now tell us where it is heading. And why.

FIXING THE REFUGEE MESS

What's wrong with our asylum system? Everything, writes DANIEL STOFFMAN

THE BEST WAY to understand what is wrong with Canada's refugee policy is to compare it with a truly compassionate one. Norway's program is all about helping the poorest refugees, the millions stranded in squalid camps in the Third World. How poor are these people? A fundraising appeal mailed to Canadians by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees asks potential donors for \$10 to provide four blackens to keep a family's children warm. Or \$60 to buy a shelter, like uncluttered wooden beams, plastic sheeting, a blanket and a rug.

Norway, with a population less than that of Greater Toronto, gave \$84 million last year to help meet such basic needs. Canada gives a meagre \$51.2 million.

On the other hand, Norway's acceptance rate for people who show up at its doorstep and ask for sanctuary within Norway itself is a minuscule 20 per cent, compared with Canada's hefty 58 per cent approval rate. In Canada refugee claims. Norway has decided to focus its humanitarian efforts on the vast majority of refugees: those who have neither the means nor the desire to relocate to another country. Some 20 million people—end up every 500 women on the planet—fall into this category. That number includes refugees forced to flee their homelands and others displaced within their own countries.

Canada has made the opposite choice. Its compass points right toward asylum seekers in the camps, it spends heavily on the comparatively small group—44,000 last year—who show up on their own to claim asylum in Canada. Dealing with refugee determination and its associated costs (about \$3,000 million a year, while millions more are spent on legal aid, health care, dental care, welfare, and other support programs).

Canada would do better aiding refugees like these Chinese in a camp in Iraq.

Canada's unique generosity to unwanted refugee claimants comes what experts call a "pull factor" that entices economic migrants out of their homes because they see an open in a way to gain quick entry into a developed country. It also gives a big boost to criminal gangs, which charge up to \$50,000 a head to smuggle migrants into Canada.

No one country can help all refugees. The goal, therefore, should be to do the most good for the greatest number of the neediest refugees. Norway achieves this. Canada, by encompassing dubious claims here and elsewhere, the millions stranded in camps, doesn't even attempt it.

No reform of our system is possible without a recognition that the millions in the camps and the thousands who make their way in Canada are not distinctly different groups. The people in the camps are desperately poor, most are women and chil-

dren, and most want to return home. Those who arrive in Canada on their own are mostly men who do not want to return home. Many arrive without any identity documents, often having discarded those used during their escape. Some wind up as indentured slaves to repay the migrants who brought them here. Others are wealthy, including the likes of Lai Changping, the gambler and businessman who is claiming refugee status in Canada to avoid facing charges of smuggling and bribery in China.

Both Norway and Canada decide claims on the basis of the Geneva Convention, which defines a refugee as someone with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, ethnicity in a social group, or political opinion. Norway rejects most claims because it interprets the Convention strictly. Canada accepts more because its arbiters—members of the Immigra-

tion and Refugee Board—use the world's broadest interpretations. For example, in 2000, Canada recognized 1,600 Palestinians and 2,000 Sri Lankans as refugees—while the rest of the world agreed to approved only 500 claims from each of these countries.

Other refugee-receiving nations routinely reject claims on the basis that the claimant comes from a safe country or could have found safety simply by moving elsewhere in his own country. The IIRB does not apply these criteria, which helps explain why its acceptance rate is the world's highest.

In addition to the refugees who make it to Canada on their own, another group is chosen in the camps by Canadian officials and brought here to start a new life. This is a cost-efficient way to resettle refugees in Canada because such people, having attained refugee status before their arrival, do not need lawyers or IRB hearings. During the 1960s, Canada resettled about 200,000 refugees this way. However, now that its focus has changed to the IRB-approved refugees, the government brings in fewer from the camps—about 13,000 a year.

Every independent analysis of Canada's refugee system comes to the same conclusion—we've got it backward. We're spending so much money on refugees in Canada and not enough on the real refugees in

the camps. "We discuss often to what extent protection reasons on those who should be applying for our immigration programs," concluded a 1997 report to the federal government, "Not Just Numbers," prepared by an independent commission that studied the immigration and refugee system. "Not Just Numbers" recommended that the IRB, whose members include defeated political candidates, company workers, and refugee advocates, be scrapped in favour of a new Protection Agency staffed by professional experts who would apply the same criteria to refugee selection in Canada as abroad.

More recently, Concordia University political scientist Stephen Gallagher, in a report last year for the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, made the same recommendation, calling the current system "dysfunctional." Another prominent voice formed in that of former ambassador William Bauer, who had long experience with refugees while serving in Southeast Asia. Bauer, winner of the Royal Wiltshire Humane Award, later served on the IRB but quit because of pressure within the organization to approve claims. Now writing a book on the international asylum system, he calls Canada's policies "intrinsic corruption of the noble concept of political asylum."

This system is perpetuated because it has

been captured by those who profit from it. The lawyers are well-organized, while ordinary Canadians who seek a just refugee system are not. Moreover, federal politicians love the IRB because of its \$100,000-a-year jobs for party stalwarts.

When Benjamin Karim, one of the authors of "Not Just Numbers," told a group of Ontario lawyers of the commission's plans for reforming the refugee system, one of them blamed out. "You can't do that. I have to pay for my swimming pool." Defenders of the status quo object to any reform that might seem the tide of life-producing claimants to Canada. That is why they oppose the recently concluded Safe Third Country agreement between Canada and the U.S. Under this pact, people already in the U.S. who show up at the Canadian border to claim refugee status will be told to make their claims in the U.S. instead.

U.S. expert Mark Krichbaum calls the Safe Third Country principle morally necessary. "A person who seeks to seek and choose among lifeboats is, by definition, not seeking an immediate protection," he writes in an essay published by the Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies. "Without the Safe Third Country concept, any so-called 'asylum' system is really nothing more than an alternative avenue of immigration."

Some of the people who make their own way to Canada are genuine refugees and have a right to Canada's protection. But the inescapable fact, proven by the much lower acceptance rates of all other countries, is that the majority are not refugees by international standards. If they are not refugees by international standards, they are not refugees, period—because it is beyond belief that the dysfunctional IRB is the only organization in the world that knows how to identify refugees.

It is time for Canada to decide what it wishes its refugee program to achieve. If the goal is to perpetuate a lucrative legal industry in Canada and allow the struggling gangs to thrive, then the current system is ideal. But if we want to do the most good for the largest number of the world's neediest refugees, then a drastic overhaul of our system is essential and long overdue.

Writer Daniel Stoffman's latest book is *Who's in the Boat? Immigration Policy*.



THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN CAPTURED BY THOSE WHO PROFIT FROM IT. THE LAWYERS ARE WELL-ORGANIZED, AND POLITICIANS LOVE IT.



THE ALLIANCE ON THE REBOUND

Slowly but steadily, Stephen Harper is giving the party a new sense of purpose

IT'S NOT OFTEN that a politician can use a minor freestom simply by sending the word. That's what happened to Stephen Harper this summer, when the newly elected Canadian Alliance leader concentrated on party business and set out part of his hometown Calgary Stampede, and some of the city's senior newspaper critics gave politicians a chance to show they're just ordinary folk. "Where's Harper?" headlines filled the newspapers, and commentators portrayed him as a test: social policy work with as much research as the Arctic ice cap. But there was more than a little method to Harper's madness. Eight months into his job as leader of the Canadian Alliance, the party has cleared its \$2.3-million debt, all but two of the 12 angry dissidents who bolted the party over Stockwell

Day's reign of error are back in the fold, not a peep is being heard from the quarrelsome Alliance caucus, and the party has crept up in the polls.

Not bad for a political movement that only a year ago was making its obituary notice. They weren't that disgraced, says Chuck Strahl, one of the leading dissidents who briefly split with Joe Clark's Tory caucus last year. Party members were deserting the ship, fundraising was drying up and uncertainty over policies was as prevalent as the gulfers and lawsuits that spoiled such machinery. "In our caucus, no one was sure any more what we stood for—it was that

The debt is gone and the polling numbers are up—no bad for a leader once, according to some critics, had gone AWOL.

bad," says Strahl. "Stephen has quickly re-established the Alliance as a conservative-minded party again. He's a very self-assured leader, who knows where he wants to go and how to get there."

Where the Alliance wants to go hasn't changed since Harper helped found its predecessor, the Reform party, in 1987. But its method for achieving power has shifted subtly. In a recent interview with *Northern*, Harper said he was seeking attention-grabbing gimmicks and preaching patience. He is realistic enough to caution followers that with the Liberals about to choose a popular Paul Martin as leader, and barring a deep recession, the big breakthrough may elude them once more. He even says the Alliance deserves its current fate—in a distant second place. "Too often in the past, the voters of Can-

ada have looked at this party and judged it not capable of governing the country," he says. "I think that voter has been wrong. The core reasons are competence, discipline and professionalism, and that's what we have in change."

In one sense, Harper is making a virtue of his peculiar circumstance and still art. Freedom Movement gambled on blowing up his Reform party in a bid to bring the Tories into an alliance in one for his third- and likely last—national campaign in 2000 (the Tories refused and Day ousted Manning, 55, for the leadership of the newly named Alliance, going onto finish a distant second to the Liberals). But Harper is 43 and has time on his side. And unlike Day, Harper, so concerned by learning as well as temperance, lets the look-in-out count to his own voters by the way: a message of his personality. Self-servingly, perhaps, he has told caucus that while a Liberal leader may get away with gimmicks, Canadians want their conservative leaders sober and serious.

More is he likely to follow his predecessor's penchant for symbolic change—Manning did with his promise to not move (now Stomping, the official residence of the Opposition leader, or Day with his ill-conceived rejection of media critics (he less and about the weekend the better). "It doesn't mean I'm never going to do something different," says Harper. "But I want to work with the system and prove the party can play in the big leagues under big league rules."

So far, Harper is a convincing genius, at least what is needed, even from unlikely quarters. Rod Lowe, the Alberta political consultant who was a key strategist for Day, credits him with bringing a sense of stability and purpose back to the party. Another says Harper's "openness" to both dissidents and loyalist MPs has helped unite disparate conservative causes. "I think he's solid," says Lowe. "That may be working in the Alliance's favour: the most recent 2006 Maritz survey shows the party back in second place with about a 16 per cent support nationally, after tanking to single digits last year."

But Lowe says Harper still lacks the going momentum during the summer or for venturing, which did last spring, that Alliance Conservatives have a different attitude. "Alliance leaders still have a problem in that they are determined to tell the truth even if it's politically unwise," he says (Harper didn't hit

criticism of handouts to the economically depressed region was poorly phrased). Others are concerned that he is too old and thoughtful for the party's good. The upside is that he's unlikely to have his competence for high office questioned, as was Day's. But supporters wonder if there is a case to have this man and policy. "It's pretty good at communicating policy, but voters have to know that you have decisions, that you love the country and the people," said one Alliance official. "Let's just say that part of it is still a work in progress."

The big test of Harper's leadership—so it was with Day and Manning—is whether he can make the breakthrough in Ottawa. Part of the problem is a policy-driven health care reform to Kyoto, gun control and Canada-U.S. relations, the Alliance's Western sensibility remains at the core of its belief system. (Harper has been careful to keep his social conservatism a personal rather than policy choice.) But Lowe believes the bigger hurdle is institutional—the existence of two conservative-minded parties dating from the same voter pool.

To some extent, Harper agrees, but admits to being short on solutions. He says he's fired the Progressive Conservatives every day

Self-servingly, perhaps, Harper has told his caucus that Canadians want their conservative leaders sober and serious



The less said about the weekend, the better

not to end the vote-splitting, from outright merger to fielding candidate candidates based on the regional strengths of the respective parties, to no vote. The ball would be thrown, he maintains (the PCs have not rejected co-operation, but Joe Alliance's superior seat representation would require the party to junior partner status). "In race there will be two major parties in Canada," says Harper. "But for now, I don't see anything, it's not happening, there are no plans to make it happen."

Meanwhile, Harper says he has more front-runner concerns. He remains in the Martin camp for the Liberal leadership office in the Alliance. For the next year, the Liberal race, an tag of Tory and NDP leadership contests, will draw most of the media interest and public attention, making it difficult for the party to get noticed. Meanwhile, the Alliance caucus may even agree to become more party-independent as the big players in caucus they were reluctant to being. "We can't start in the next election with our second-best team," said one Alliance official. "We disagree to our current shadow cabinet, but Monte was our best Alliance critic and you can't not use Deb Gray." Many Alliance insiders believe Harper will shuffle his parliamentary team this spring to present the public a more experienced and effective front bench.

Harper will then begin preparing for the next election. At this point, his prospects are no better than Day's were two years ago. But if Harper has done his job properly, he won't face the second guessing that doomed his hapless predecessor. "You don't sell people if we don't get elected next time there's no tomorrow," he explains. "That's not how a responsible, permanent political institution thinks." It remains to be seen if he will succeed in changing the culture of impotence that has characterized the party since its inception. But if he's making the party to grow up, he also seems open to the idea that he too has some growing to do. So at the next Calgary Stampede, don't be surprised to see more of the sober-headed Harper, whooping it up with the rest of the parties. He'll probably be wearing a Stampede two-piece and juggling a leadership party that is confident it'll be around next time. ☐

HANDING OUT HEAVY AMMO

The Auditor General blasts gun registry mess

FOR YEARS, the voices of outer Canada cried foul. Prairie farmers who shoot poophers with their .22-calibre rifles. East of the Bar North who sell use firearms to get food on the table. Recreational hunters, target shooters and collectors from across the country who consider guns a routine part of their lives. All deplored the federal government's Bill C-68, introduced in 1995, which sought to universally register all firearms in Canada by Jan. 1, 2003. The proposed registry, said its critics, was wildly intrusive and, above all, a colossal waste of money. In urban Canada, those protests largely fell on deaf ears. Opponents of Bill C-68 were viewed as gun nuts, conspiracy theorists (after all, the most radical among them claimed the legislation was a precursor to Osama bin Laden's (their weapons) and fiscal shenanigans.

On that last score, at least, perceptions shifted dramatically last week. In her annual report to Parliament, Auditor General Sheila Fraser asked off the usual horror stories of waste and mismanagement, including multimillion-dollar companies that operate in Canada enjoying hundreds of millions of dollars in tax loopholes and Public Works Canada spending \$1.7 billion annually on office space without fully assessing need. But by far the most eye-catching item was Fraser's account of how the federal Department of Justice handled the controversial Canadian Firearms Program, which took effect in December 1998. Initial estimates priced the program at \$119 million over five years, with licence and registration fees from firearms owners expected to return \$117 million—a net cost of just \$2 million. But by 2006, reports Fraser, the Justice Department pegged the cost at upwards of \$1 billion, with rebate fees of \$340 million—meaning taxpayers are on the hook for at least \$860 million.



Depositors of Bill 68 were given almost an at least one from—its costly to administer

Sheila Fraser, the Justice Department advised the government about the revised estimates, but no one saw fit to keep the House of Commons informed. "The issue here is not gun control," declared Fraser. "And it's not even an enormous cost overrun, although those are serious. What's really unreasonable is that Parliament was in the dark."

Predictably, opposition MPs leapt on the revelations. The Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservatives called for

the resignation of all three justice ministers who handled the gun registry file—Allan Rock, Anne McLellan and incumbent Martin Cauchon, respectively. More unusual—and yet another sign of the caucus disunity that plagues the federal Liberals these days—was that several backbench government MPs agreed heads should probably roll. Benoit Stolt, who represents the northern Ontario riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane, took particular aim at Rock, the godfather of Bill C-68. Stolt said he warned Rock at the outset that the legislation was costly and unworkable, but the minister "drove this with tunnel vision." Rock,



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in turn, blamed the attacks on "pure load-and-shoot politics," suggesting that all Paul Martin supporters like Lamer were trying to undermine Rock's reputation to be the next Liberal leader.

Far away from Parliament Hill, long-time opponents of Bill C-68 reflected on what they described as a bitter-sweet victory. Bizar, because they doubted the Liberals will do anything to staunch the over-pending—let alone heed their call to scrap the gun registry entirely. Sweet, because an independent authority has finally substantiated their contention that Ottawa's laxest gun control effort is a financial and administrative boondoggle.

As early as 1995, organizations like the Edmonton-based National Firearms Association, which claims to have 125,000 members, predicted implementing C-68 would cost upwards of \$500 million. The association's current president, Jim Hester, is an avid hunter, gun collector and target shooter who heads to an idyllic retreat practice range three times a week. "It's extremely relaxing," he says. "When he does it, he comes with him a five-cent check book of government documents to prove he is legally entitled to own and transport his arsenal, including restricted handguns. Hester says he has no problem with acquiring firearms owners to be licensed, much like hunters and automobile drivers (under the current legislation, gun owners had until Jan. 1, 2004, to obtain licenses). But he draws the line at registering every single gun or rifle. Not only is it cumbersome and costly, in Hester's view, it's dangerous. "The fewer people who know I have guns and where I store them the better," he says. "If it fell into the wrong hands, the registry would be like a shopping list for criminals who want to obtain weapons."

In fact, Hester's most objection to the gun registry is that it targets the wrong people. "It's a downwind Toronto solution that doesn't work for 99 per cent of Canada," he says. "Look, guns of Toronto are a war zone right now because of imported and illegal guns, drugs and gangs. It's not because of Uncle George with his duck gun in Come By Chance, Newfoundland."

The most recent push for gun control in Canada indeed directly attributable to the horror of urban riots. It began with the murder of 14 young women at Montreal's Ecole polytechnique, a tragedy that passed



Former justice ministers Rock and McLeish became targets even of Liberal backbenchers

its 13th anniversary last week. And it picked up steam after the widely publicized shooting of 25-year-old Georgia Leveson in a trendy Toronto club in April, 1994. Gun control advocates took to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police argued then, as they do now, that a national registry helps police track the thousands of legal guns that are stolen each year. They also say police cannot be expected to trace illegal guns if they don't know which ones are legal.

But it's probably a safe bet that even the

most fervent gun control supporter could not have anticipated the level of resistance to Bill C-68—and the utter mismanagement of the program is set in motion. As Fraser recounts in her report, six provinces and two territories backed a constitutional challenge to the firearms legislation the Liberal government launched in 1996 (the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in Ottawa's favour in June 2000). At the same time, all four western provinces as well as Newfoundland opted out of administering the firearms program, leaving Ottawa had to directly incur the costs of doing so. Individual gun owners also proved obstinate, waiting until the last minute to apply for a licence or register their firearms and creating backlogs that were costly to unlock.

In an attempt to replicate crises, the Justice Department reduced registration fees and offered refunds, forcing the government to foot a bigger portion of the bill. It also spent more than \$50 million on television ads and other public relations plays to try to sell the program.

Responding to last week's appeal, Jean Chrétien blamed the provinces and gun control opponents for making the implementation of Bill C-68 far tougher than it needed to be. As Fraser's report indicates, the Prime Minister has a point—albeit a limited one. According to Fraser, the main reason for the cost overruns comes down to two words, "poor management." Ottawa grossly underestimated the costs of processing licenses and registrations. Overly complicated forms resulted in 90 per cent of applications containing errors and some more, more than twice what had been predicted. The Justice Department's computer system simply weren't equipped to handle the task at hand.

Faced with all this evidence of incompetence, Chrétien assumed a familiar role as a master of understatement. "We, there were some cost overruns," he asserted. "But the system is in place and it's a good system." Still, the Liberals, fearing a backbench revolt, graciously withdrew a request for an additional \$72 million for the gun registry that MPs were supposed to approve on Dec. 5. Some opposition members accused that the flip-flop marked the beginning of the end of the firearms act. More likely, though, it was a delaying tactic designed to rattle the conservatives—and allow the Liberals to live to fight another day. □

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Moscow's aging stockpiles represent a growing threat to the world

A plant to destroy weapons was to be built in Shchuch'ye, but little has been done.

Even as the West continues to pump in money, critics in the U.S. Congress say that, which under a series of international agreements has pledged to reduce its stock piles, is not living up to its end of the bargain. Western money appears to be disappearing: a recent Russian parliamentary audit revealed that US\$320 million in foreign aid earmarked for nuclear disarmament was unaccounted for. Some observers, meanwhile,

change that Western funding for missile production allows Russia to divert resources to new nuclear programs that are in contravention of international non-proliferation guidelines.

Money may be difficult to come by in Russia. So is establishing what, if any, existing missiles have already been destroyed. Russia has barred foreign inspection from some facilities. "There's big money to make under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, a program launched by the G8 last June at the Kananaskis summit in Alberta, \$32 billion (including the \$3 billion from Canada) was pledged to dismantle Russian arsenals. Now, the G8 countries are demanding that Russia cooperate fully by allowing far-fish and allowing the access. If the Russian refuse, it is unclear whether all the money will be advanced. "We have made it clear to Russia that there is going to have to be significant improvement," said Jim Wright, assistant deputy minister for global security in Canada's Foreign Affairs Department. "It is a serious situation."

So is Russia's ongoing nuclear program.

Nowhere in Russia is the vulnerability of its arsenals more frightening than in the Siberian ports of Vladivostok and Murmansk

President Vladimir Putin has made strengthening his country's nuclear forces a top priority. The Russian military is currently building 40 naval nuclear missiles and is modernizing both naval nuclear forces and a fleet of Tupolev-160 bombers, the backbone of Russia's airborne nuclear strike forces. Advanced weapon research has also been boosted at 10 elite secret research centres, where an estimated 40,000 specialists are working on new nuclear weapons. "They've come to expect the West will pay for safety—even as they have been moving in great secrecy," says Charles Diggins, a Moscow-based researcher for JMWAVE, a Washington agency that tracks Russian nuclear safety.

New weapons aside, Russia is coming under increasing pressure to do the problems

in its missile reduction program. Canadian officials can testify to how difficult it is to get things up and running. Canadian funds have already been spent on building roads and power lines to a proposed plant in Shchuch'ye where chemical and biological weapons were to be destroyed. It's unclear if that plant will ever be built (the U.S. had suspended funding, but may now go ahead if Russia fulfills its commitments and is accountable for the money). Canada also spent money promoting a plan to use plutonium from Russian nuclear weapons to fuel for reactors in Ontario. But Russia now wants to keep the plutonium for its own reactor program. "They see this stuff as gold," says Diggins, "and there's enormous opposition to letting the West destroy it."

Nowhere in Russia is the vulnerability of its Cold War arsenals more frightening than in the Siberian ports of Vladivostok and Murmansk. There, 131 submarines lie idle, under constant condition, many with nuclear, nuclear fuel and possibly even weapons still aboard (in November 2000, decommissioned nuclear submarines near Vladivostok caught fire, sending fumes of a nuclear catastrophe, panicked

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Iraq | Show us the goods

When UN weapons inspectors paid a surprise call on Saddam Hussein's overgrown oil-slicked palace in Baghdad, they found, among other things, a jar of margarine in the fridge and walls decorated with posters praising the dictator. But no sign of weapons of mass destruction. The inspectors, who were previously not allowed to enter Saddam's palaces, also visited old missile sites but, again, uncovered no evidence of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. Saddam had promised to deliver a complete list of illicit weapons on Dec. 7, a day ahead of a UN deadline to do so. And in New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised Saddam's co-operation, but cautioned, "This is only the beginning."

Washington was not impressed with developments. George W. Bush said that the early signs from Baghdad were "not encouraging" if Saddam continues to deny he has weapons banned by the UN, analysts say the administration may try to rally a consensus at the Security Council to approve steps to force against Iraq. According to reports, Washington also wants UN inspectors to smuggle Iraq weapons reports out of the country. They would be

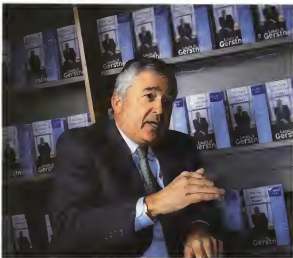


UN inspectors found nothing at the former missile plant in Baghdad.

offered protection in the U.S. in exchange for revealing where Saddam's caches are.

The inspectors, meanwhile, must report by late January on their progress in locating and destroying any Iraqi weapons. Left with UN inspectors to discover that mobile equipment

hidden during inspections in 1998 had disappeared in the interim, Hans Blix, the chief UN inspector, is demanding to know where the items have gone. But he was unimpressed by Bush's insistence that Iraq possesses child weapons, saying he was not working for the Americans. "Our job is to report," says Blix, "and whether there is war or peace is for the Council and its members. We're in nobody's pockets."



'THE CUSTOMER DRIVES EVERYTHING'

IBM's outgoing boss talks about his now legendary turnaround of Big Blue

IN 1993, Lou Gerstner revealed one of the least likely people to successfully lead the world's largest-but-failing-technology company. His background was in consumer products, as a senior exec at American Express and as chief of RJR Nabisco, the food and tobacco giant. Before that, he was a management consultant at McKinsey & Co. Now he was an outsider charged with turning around-looking IBM, which lost US\$4.1 billion the year he arrived and had a stock

price to match around US\$13. Today, the stock price is around \$85, and the company made \$39 billion last year. Gerstner, 60, who stepped down as CEO in February and will retire as chairman on Dec. 31, discusses how he accomplished the now legendary turnaround on his new book, *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* On a tightly scheduled

stop in Tucson last week, he sat down for a chat with *Maclean's* Editor Anthony Wilson-Smith and Assistant Managing Editor Ertan Woodward, hosted by Indigo Books & Music CEO Heather Reintjes. Highlights from their questioning.

When you came to IBM, what did you find?
I found a group of employees literally frozen in place. They didn't know what had hit them. In 1990, the company had record

profits. For two decades, it was listed as the best-run company in the world, most admired company in the world, and all of a sudden people are talking about breaking it up, calling it a disaster. And an outsider comes in, and they don't know who he is, what he's going to do. He's never been in the computer industry. So I guess I found people quite scared, skeptical about me, and very concerned about what was going to happen to the company.

You famously said IBM didn't need a vision in 1993, but how long did it take you to get a clear idea of where you'd like things?

Well, I ran into some problems with the media. In August of 1993, IBM actually didn't need a vision, it didn't need a new direction. That was really the first of all to know that it wasn't going to be broken up. That was really important to the IBMers, that we were going to fight back.

Secondly, they needed to know there wasn't anything fundamentally flawed in the company's product line or its research. We'd get out and compete. Start winning in the marketplace again.

So that's what we had to do first. At that point, once we got everybody back working again, we could then address the question, "OK, so where does the company go?" By 1995, we started to really address this issue of the Internet, and a renewed world, not a PC world, and an increasingly globalized company.

You write that you had to change IBM's culture. How did you do that?

First of all, not all companies have dogmatic rules. Ineffective companies, noncompetitive companies that have been created out of acquisitions, have often a weak culture or a shoddy product. It's only in great situations where cultures become deep and embedded, and IBM was a great, successful company.

But when the world changed, the culture was preventing activities and attitudes that were appropriate for a prize race. It's very hard to change a culture, and you can't impose it. You're dealing with people's beliefs, people's commitments, so it tends to be a multi-year process. You gotta talk about it a lot, you gotta give them a reason why they should believe differently, you have to connect to the strategy of the mission, their own personal benefits. And we did that, over a period of about four or five years.

So what changes did you need to bring about?
One was the view that IBM was not a group of fiefdoms, not a bunch of individual empires. And they were. IBM Canada was a fiefdom, and the old days, so was IBM Germany, so was each of the product divisions. We needed to have a sense that we were going to operate as a team, as a global entity, and that was totally foreign to the culture, to operate as a single company. It took massive change to get people to do that. Compensation changes, organizational changes, lots of things. Effectively IBM Canada would now be a part of a huge global entity.

How tough was your decision to slash prices on mainframe computers? Looking back, it may seem the obvious thing to have done, but it wasn't obvious to everybody.

It wasn't obvious to the people inside IBM! It was a bet the company doesn't, but basically everything we did back in those days was a bet-the-company decision, because the company was so precarious. But you're absolutely right. The vast majority of our profits came from the mainframe product. Our prices were anywhere from 25 per cent to 45 per cent higher than our competitors. And when we cut the price, it meant an immediate reduction in revenue, profits and cash. Yes, in a sense, it was absolutely crucial to stabilizing the company. It sent a message to our customers all over the world that IBM was back.

You don't seem like a guy addled by self-doubt, but did you ever have second thoughts when you made a call like that?

Oh, I had so many doubts in that first year. It was really scary. I think, if you've been in your business a long time, you feel comfortable making decisions that are right in the sweet spot of what you do. But you get outside of it, and anybody with any self-awareness knows that you're going on gut instinct, and a little bit of luck. That whole first year I was just putting it together.

What's your management philosophy?

I listen with the view that the customer drives everything, the entire process. A lot of people say, "We put customers first," but it's a slogan for many companies. In my view, it is absolutely the thing you live by every day in a successful enterprise.

I believe very strongly in a fact-based, problem-solving approach to business. No

emotion, no proprietary interest, no protect your own turf. Let's get the numbers out, let's do good analysis, and then let's generate the right decision, and everybody should support it when we finish.

I believe everybody should get a chance to speak about what they think is right. I don't believe in hierarchical organizations. In fact, in almost every company I've worked for I've gotten in trouble, because I tend to go find the people who might have the answers, and they might not be the people who report directly to me. So I tend to wander around finding the smart people who are wrapped in the subject.

And I can't stand politics in an institution. I will not tolerate people who criticize others at their own party, so I'll say, "This person's not doing his or her job," or, "That part of our company isn't performing well." If we want to criticize, let's go back up on our competitors. But we're all in it together, and that teamwork was important to IBM.

Do you think stock options are a good method of compensation?

I think they're essential. They don't have to be options as we know them today, but if you don't have your management team totally aligned with the people who own the company, the shareholders, and if the vast majority of their compensation is minimal unless they produce for the shareholders, you've got a dysfunctional system.

I would like to see more companies do what IBM has done. We require our managers to hold shares. They can't just roll their options the minute they become vested. That's just a form of delinquency. We think that the managers need to have some skin in the game. The purpose of options is to give the managers an opportunity to become owners.

In this troubled business climate, what would you tell other CEOs about how to behave?

I don't think the vast majority of CEOs in North America need to be told how to behave. I think we had 12 or 15 bad, bad situations that have come to light in the last year of thousands of public companies, and my general view is that most CEOs are reasonable and of integrity. Now, those CEOs, if they did what the 12 or 15 companies allegedly have done, those people should be punished. Because that's absolutely unacceptable behavior. ■



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WHERE IS TODAY'S SADAT?

Egypt's leader in 1977 showed that acceptance of Israel is key to peace

I STARTED WRITING a column for this magazine 25 years ago. In 1977, journalists still knew how to do "interviews" with editors. Electronic typewriters were in every Madison office. Women Alexanders of Spain won the Nobel Prize for literature and was never much heard of again. Jimmy Carter was president of the United States, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was still married—just to Margaret. In the middle of the summer, Elia Preley died. Margaret Atwood published her 12th and 13th books. And, geopolitically, one set dwarfed everything else: Twenty-five high years ago, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt went to Israel and spoke to its parliament, the Knesset, on Nov. 20.

For those not old enough to remember this journey of Sadat's, in 1977 Egypt was still looking its wounds from the 1967 Six Day War. Sadat had launched in the autumn of 1973. Part of the Six was still in Israeli hands, and Sadat wanted it back. After the usual diplomacy failed, he hit on the new policy of an Arab state negotiating face to face with Israel. His speech to its parliament, the Knesset, was widely read in a Sudan, spoke like a poet, and made his confusion:

"We," he told the Israeli, speaking of the Arab world, "refused to meet with you, any where, yet." At international conferences, organizations and meetings. "Our representatives met, and still do not exchange greetings with you. Yes." Through peace talks and negotiations over the years, he added, when the Israelis had requested face-to-face meetings. "Our delegates met without exchanging a direct word. Yes, this has happened."

Then he turned directly to the parliament: "But, today, I tell you and I declare to the whole world, that we accept to sit with you on permanent peace based on justice. We do not want to encircle you or be encircled ourselves by destructive missiles ready for launching, nor by the shells of grudges and hatreds."

Sadat's Knesset speech that November day was made up of both lies and truths.

Egypt's president claimed he was not in Israel to make a "supreme peace" from the rest of the Arab world. He was.

No Arab state had openly supported his trip to Jerusalem and only King Hassan of Jordan had given it tacit support. It was precisely because Sadat saw that the Arab world's efforts to do away with the Jewish state, including four wars, had come to nothing that he had circumvented routine ways of thinking by going to Jerusalem.

Sadat claimed he spoke as an Arab from a position of "strength and weakness." But Israel had the superior forces while Sadat realized that relying on the Soviet Union put him in a perilous position. Still, his truths were far more important.

By his actions and words, Sadat demonstrated two things. First, he confirmed the truth that no genuine representative of the Arab world had ever accepted Israel and, second, that any resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hinged on this genuine acceptance of Israel by the Arabs. Once that acceptance emerged, all else could be resolved. That in its absence, where every discussion the Arabs conducted with the Israelis was simply like a wrestler expending himself for a better tactical hold on the opponent without any sign of disengagement, the entire question of peace was laid to rest.

The events that followed Sadat's speech demonstrated that, as now, that that acceptance by the Arabs was not forthcoming. Sadat profited from his initiative. At the Camp David talks in September, 1978, he got back the Sinai and Egypt's Suez Canal was reopened. Israeli Prime Minister

Menachem Begin produced his promised plan for Palestinian autonomy, but it was deeply flawed. This might have been corrected but Sadat had no time to wait. There was a price on his head and four years after his speech in Jerusalem he was dead, assassinated in Cairo by a group of Muslim fanatics.

The Arab world remained static. There was no process to produce new leaders. Twenty-five years later, there is no successor to Anwar Sadat. The Israelis, on the other hand, had the system and the faith to come up with successors to begin. Eventually, they elected Yitzhak Rabin who negotiated the Oslo Accord. When the second failed, the Jewish state responded with Benjamin Netanyahu, but then elected Ehud Barak who went even farther in his peace offerings to the Palestinians than Rabin.

Today the Middle East is a quagmire. In Egypt, an ailing President Hosni Mubarak has decided that a complementary relationship with Islamism is better than being murdered, and Egypt is now the home of the most vicious anti-Semitism in the Middle East as well as a strong Islamic movement. In Syria, Bashar al-Assad is a weak leader manipulated by the hardline Baathist movement giving aid and comfort to radical Islamic organizations headquartered in Damascus. Jordan's King Abdullah is no fanatic, but he is seen by his countrymen as too much in personally benefiting his lot through his intimate contacts with Western businesses. The Saudis speak out of at least three sides of their mouths. And while while, the Palestinian fell further into a stalled economy into which billions of Western dollars has flowed, something virtually no one but Yasser Arafat, his cronies and some some donors.

"Why don't we sit together with the courage of men and the boldness of heroes," asked Sadat in Jerusalem, "daring to enter a huge edifice of peace?" Some real world Arabs are honest and they pay the price. In Egypt, the American University in Cairo professor Said Benhabib faces prison for his encouragement of religious liberty and tolerance. The Arabs could use some boldness in their political leaders, all right, but the increasingly moderate medieval social systems of the region are not likely to give me to another Anwar Sadat.

Barbara Amiel's column appears monthly. barb@mediatext.ca

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ROGERS



THE ROAD TO LAOS

Living here, I've seen beauty and frustration. And my friend's appendix.

PHOTO, 2002: I live on a red, dusty stroke of a road, somewhere between the Russian circus and Thai Laung—a golden strip that stretches its neck upwards to the hot Lao city. The road winds through the capital, Vientiane, passing by the Morning Market, mango dogs, and chickens being roasted by a super Group of Damage-dressed models following the weaving road at dawn, food bowls in hand, collecting alms from old women with smiles red from chewing betel nut. The road follows the giant Mekong River, which acts as a border to neighbouring Thailand.

Mekong, Mother Winter: I sit in a riverside shop, drinking a pineapple shake and watching the long tail boats, expensive fillets and people as they collect their salaries or from the Mother's arms. Laos is the most heavily bombed country in the world, one of Asia's poorest nations and one of the few remaining communist states. The dismal facts make Laos sound like a horrible place to live. It isn't. No doubt, people struggle through poverty and inadequate health care, but if I search the faces of people passing by, we sitting (rain has to shield the bright sun from their own brighter faces), all I can detect is gentleness and the only thing I find is sweetness. CUSO, a Canadian organization working for social justice, brought me here to teach as a volunteer. My placement is with the Gender and Development Group, which raises awareness about gender issues. My journey on this road will be unique, of that I am certain.

I go to visit a friend who is in hospital because she's had her appendix cut. When I arrive, Khampun's daughter and mother-in-law are sprawled out on a huge mat on the floor. They will stay at the hospital, sleeping in the same room, until their money is well enough to go home. The family will pay 40,000 kip, or \$6, a day for Khampun's care. The room has the air of a happy family gathering and our conversation comes around to the appendix. How come it doesn't hurt where it's taken out? How big are they anyway? Before I leave, Khampun says to her

youngest daughter, "Pu, go get the appendix out of the closet." Pu obviously produces her mother's appendix in a small, plastic bag. It's passed around the room and everyone remarks on how small it looks. Plans are made to keep it in a bottle of fish, or rice whisky. Khampun's husband bursts into the room and beams, "Let's eat!" My western-only disposition when I realize he's not referring to the appendix.

He savages sticky rice, soy milk and steamed fish with garlic and lime on the centre of the mat and we gather around the food while Khampun and her appendix look on. More co-workers arrive with beer and music, and before I know it, a party is underway. A nurse eventually comes to tell us she is leaving the hospital gate, but we are welcome to sleep with the family on the floor. We decline and venture out into the humid night and cheerful chaos, leaving the appendix behind to rest as the closet until tomorrow's visitors appear.

I have arrived.
Sunrise, 2002: Live on a red, wet, mud bath of a road, somewhere between Viet-



nam's deepest poverty and the world's largest paddle. Rainy season has decimated Laos like hungry red ants on food. The sound of the downpour on our roof has gone from charming to monotonous. Morning bubbling so work are like giant mud-wreathing matches, made all the more redoubt by the fact that there are no apparent traffic rules. I sit by the Mekong and watch as the thousands come to overtake the riverbanks.

The road slopes mainly as I ride home after work. We have drafted a proposal for a project on violence against women but need permission from the Lao government before we can begin. Five months and still no funding to be found. Commence along the slippery road and hit a pothole as I laugh, different drive by and exclaim, "Foreigner? Foreigner? Big-road foreigner?" I understand them, even though the tone. Lao language continues to confound me as I mistakenly refer to friends as "jugs" or "wets" when intending to be thoroughly polite. I dream of summer back home, easy conversation, the pervasive smell of barbecues, a peaceful public across a placid lake.

Seven more months is go.

Autumn, 2002: I live on a red, dirt road where I never before had dreams of home and thoughts of extending my contract for another year. There are days when the beauty of Laos and its people is clear and bright. There are days when this beauty is clouded by the frustrations of daily life in a developing nation. Often, Canada seems like the lush, green country in the world. Often, too, I think we could learn plenty from the social and spiritual richness of poor countries like Laos. There are days filled with hope, when the people and organizations working for meaningful "development" seem wise and genuine, and there are days when development seems to mean nothing but increased salaries and exciting international opportunities for foreign consultants. There are days—but I will not count them. Instead, I will make the most of the days on this red road where dogs are pitiable and modern medicine is at four in the morning. This road will be home for one year. As it curves around, carrying the malaria, challenges and offerings of Laos, it surrounds me with beauty and I welcome its lessons of grace.

Kelley Powell is a former policy analyst for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, calls Borneo, Sri Lanka, home. To connect: overlapis@shaw.ca

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REHAB FOR JOHNS

Winnipeggers caught hiring prostitutes have the option of school

RELAXING OVER A CUP of coffee in their Winnipeg home on a grey and dreary November afternoon, Richard and Sharna look like any other introverted, middle-class, married couple. But the story they have to tell sets them apart. In August 2006, Richard was arrested and charged under Section 213 of the Criminal Code with communicating in a public place for the purposes of engaging in prostitution. According to Richard, 33, it was the usual routine to a usual addiction that had gripped him since his early teens, beginning with marijuana but eventually progressing and escalating into commercial affairs and, eventually, seeking sex on the street. Sharna, 36, had been aware of some of Richard's habits, but ultimately agreed to give him a chance to reform. His knee



Start your children! pleads Pemberton, whose neighborhood is plagued by drive-by sex.

critical record. But if they are ever re-arrested on the same charge, they will have no option but to go to court!

Like the vast majority of jobs arrested since the program began in Winnipeg five years ago, Richard readily agreed to participate. But shortly before doing so in November 2006, Richard, who is an assembly worker at a manufacturing plant, decided to attend an event sponsored by Premier Royce, a Christian organization that urges men to redirect themselves to God and good families. Sharna had already become a born-again Christian earlier that year. Richard credits God with freeing him from his sexual addiction—and the job school with opening his eyes to the harm his behavior did to those in the sex trade, or, as Richard put it, "I heard from parents who had huge tears to keep their kids out from the cops who drove around their streets looking for jobs," says Richard quickly, his eyes welling up with tears. "I was one of those cops."

THE DAY AFTER I speak with Richard and Sharna. I attend a mock job school held at St. John's Anglican hall in Winnipeg's inner-city core. Over the next nine hours, we—about two dozen social workers, students and reporters—hear from presenters who rigorously appear at job and schools, delivering the most message they do there. The only thing missing is the jobs. For the day, we in the audience are to assume their identities and, at times, feel their shame. Not that we are exactly a representative bunch. For one thing, nearly half of the participants are women, in the sexual services, all the jobs are men. Nor do we cover the cross-section of society that I've told cops up at job schools, ranging in age from 18 to 40 and including everyone from laymen and doctors to welfare recipients.

In a brief opening address, Judy Taylor, a parole supervisor with the Salvation Army, makes a challenging note that will reverberate through the entire day. Taylor points out that, of the 350 men who had gone through job schools in Winnipeg since 1997, only four were subsequently re-arrested on



a similar charge. She then warns that future arrests will be added to leave and our one exit back to the courts. "This program is not a sympathy," she tells us. "This is a straight. This is an opportunity."

Crown attorney Ross Kidd is the next to speak. He goes over what would have happened if you had not come to job school—and will happen if you are ever arrested again. A public courtroom will hear the many details of not social workers, and the next speaker from that hearing would have to be used against us in divorce or child custody proceedings. Definitely, Kidd also notes the far more serious charges we could face—with penalties ranging up to 10 years in jail—if the prostitute we engage turns out to be a suicide. "The rules are high enough for you," he says, "as you try to assign whether someone is a danger or not."

Kidd is followed by Det. Sgt. Kelly Deane of the Winnipeg city police moral team. Casually dressed and unshaven, Deane soon breaks the veneer of a street cop. Our sexual advances, he says, are feeding the drug trade and organized crime

"Ninety-nine per cent of the girls are addicted to a substance, usually crack cocaine," adds Deane. "Why do you think a blow job is \$40? That's how much a rack of crack costs."

Deane is opening his briefcase and pulls out several knives, some up to eight inches in length. "When you stopped that girl on the street, did you realize the bad that is in her hand?" he asks. "There are sick people who live in this city and these girls have to protect themselves. Also, these girls have to protect their money and their life. We had a rash of that you a few weeks ago."

I look around and notice some parents' pangs, especially the men, are granting. I try to imagine the reaction of the real girls

to this and what follows, starting with a public health nurse's graphic slide show on sexually transmitted diseases. We are told a high percentage of sex-trade workers are infected with herpes, syphilis, hepatitis and AIDS. Pictures of genital, butt and other body parts covered in sores or oozing pus flash on the screen.

Naturally, it's no time for lunch. After a sparsely repast of sandwiches and coffee, the afternoon session begins with a flourish. Three residents of inner-city neighborhoods come forward to describe how these street affects them. The most disarming by far is twelve-year-old Jane Pemberton, a self-described "280 lb. of Irish temper." Pemberton, the father of an 11-year-old son and four even younger daughters, arrives along with his Rotweiler guard dog. "I am the animals," Pemberton tells us. "I am the scary." He relates how one daughter, about 3 years old, snatched her exposed foot on a steel spring and how she must now endure annual tests for the AIDS virus. Grieving down his knees, Pemberton pleads: "Please save my children and the children of my neighbors."

Before we can catch our breath, we are confronted by three former prostitutes, aged 26 to 31—though they all look much older. Small wonder: between them, they have more than three decades of experience on the street. The most searing account comes from Lynn Sharna, who tells about using prostitution to support a \$1,000-a-day drug habit and continuing to work even after she believed the bad AIDS (it turned out she didn't). "If you quit now, I'm told it's without a condom," Sharna recalls. "Because I knew I was going to get really high afterwards."

The final speaker of the day is Winnipeg's youngest sex worker, who talks about the need to break the cycle of "dissected thoughts" that lead men to do something they know in their hearts is wrong—and Richard, who relates how his religious conversion allowed him to do just that. Nothing new and a bit corny, I ask Judy Taylor how religiously she responds. "At first, there's a lot of denial, confusion, even anger at being there," she says. "But by the end of the day, some of the same men are in tears." Taylor pauses, then adds: "I'm not naive enough to think that everyone will change their ways. But many do."

It's easy to see why.

We are told a high percentage of sex-trade workers are infected with herpes, syphilis, hepatitis and AIDS

TOYLAND TRAVELS

Repackaged themes dominate the season, PATRICIA HLUCHY finds

DEAR SANTA CLAUS,

I know people my age don't normally send you letters, but I hope you'll find the time to read mine. No, this is not a Christmas wish list (100Gs would be nice, though). Actually, I'm writing to suggest a way to lighten your load on the big night. Why not get the elves to stop production on a couple of toys? Like the new Rapunzel Barbie—Santa, she's cute in her blond, braided way, but will you please send her back to her tower? I know many girls are dying to get her, just as they begged for Snow White, Cinderella and Nutcracker Barbie in years past. But the actress actress has already gone global many times over—does she have to conquer the fairy-tale world too? Must the Germans be mollified by Barbie's ghost?

And then there's Elmo, who's back on the hit parade this year. You and the man probably didn't have to sit through weeks of *Rock 'N' Roll* Elmo-singing lighthearted and Rock Around the Clock a few years ago. Now will you have to endure the gooey-eyed Muppet's latest venture: *Elmo's*. Will you please consider putting the Christmas Dance Elmo on a boat, setting it on fire and sending it out to sea, Viking funeral-style?

Finally, Santa, there are some new, assemble-them-yourself toys on the block: *Build-a-Zoid*, and the namesake are *zoidzappers*, *WarBots*, *Zaber Gun*. They look like predatory animals crossed with war machines. Santa, you're a gentle, caring guy, and this is supposed to be a time of peace on earth. Will you please, um, blow these vicious toys the water?

MERRY CHRISTMAS,
A PARENT

ONE DAY, little Max is barely able to utter the word "ice." The next, he's screaming "Hot Wheels!" Right around the time child-



ren learn to talk they develop *Play-doh*, a highly sophisticated sensor that detects when objects are most to be destroyed—or, at least, when are most aggressively animated. Then if they've never seen all the kid-focused ads on commercial networks, they absorb toy buzz the way their moms recklessly absorb the latest body lotion/fashion trend. And then, as with everything else, youngsters desire, they want those hot toys desperately.

Parents, of course, are in a no-win situation at Christmas. If you turn your child

down, you're basically proving that Santa doesn't exist, because Santa is supposed to have read every word of that carefully penned letter. If you give children exactly what they want, you may have to swallow some principles—not to mention spend some serious money. And, yes, you may have to listen to Elmo singing the Christmas Dance song a few hundred times.

"I'm torn between not wanting to encourage material greed in my kids, and wanting them to think it's OK to dream," says Just

Dan White, 41, a Toronto public servant with two daughters, as she warily opens a *Dora* Store doll on a toy store shelf, one of her 10-year-old's coveted items. "I mean, I went through the catalogues when I was a kid too." Like many parents, *Dan White* tries to write a balance between the popular toys all kids seem to know about and gifts "they will actually do something productive with."

The one monster hit in toyland this year can involve a certain amount of creativity, and it directly gets young ones moving. Key-

blades are essentially spinning tops, albeit ones with various parts to enhance the speed and duration of the spin. They come with hefty marketing support—including a *Nelvana* animated series on YTV—and a parent-friendly endorsement: they captured first place in the *seven* play category of the Canadian Toy Training Council's Children's Choice Awards. And, if you can't find one, Keyblades also happens to be fairly cheap—starting from around \$20 each. Keyblades originated as toys in Japan

three years ago, proving so popular that—in a reversal of the usual pattern—dolls were spun off into a comic book, a video game and, finally, a TV show. And toy stores say they'll ship out the shelves as soon as a new shipment arrives. "I think they're so popular because they've become so difficult to get," says Peter Emery, owner of The Toy Bin in Vancouver. "It becomes a self-perpetuating thing."

As for Keyblades, many of the other hot toys this season are variations on a theme, or recreations of characters who've been around for a while. Like a certain 45-year-old named Barbie. This is up for the *Nutcracker* version, star of *First Christmas*, with this year's aimed at *Rapunzel Barbie*, to take a stab at death the extremely hair extension, parents can't decide how long it will be before that golden plot disappears under the tree or into the laundry. Oh, and the hair brush plays a sweet little dirge.

Another popular toy this Christmas is also part—as so many toys are—of a growing, multimedia empire, albeit one more modest than Barbie's. *Clifford the Big Red Dog* is based on the children's book and cartoon character. Perhaps because true dogs are a rarity in toyland, and definitely thanks to the toy's whimsical design, this one's selling hotly. But Clifford's good fortune won't be enough to bail out its distributor, *Trombone Toys*, which obtained bankruptcy protection from its creditors last week and laid off almost half its staff. Meanwhile, some independent toy stores are reporting less interest in the *True House* distributed by *NECO* Scandinavia of London, Ont., one of a popular series of wooden toy houses manufactured by *Plan Toys* of Thailand. It was cited in the recent catalogue of recommended toys in *Today's Parent* magazine.

Yet another mega-brand behind a third gift retailers are citing as one of the year's biggest: *Harry Potter*. Lego. These megadons of different products, and consumers are snapping them up. As for toys deemed too old-fashioned, they're definitely attracting interest, though nothing as intense as Harry mania. Some parents whose kids no doubt dreamt as *Spidy* on Halloween are going for the *Spider-Man* Web Blaster, which comes with two cans of "web fluid" capable of spinning 600 feet of, uh, web. (Apparently there's no need for a special web bucket for cleanup.) Meanwhile, *Hotels* are joined with *Lord of the Rings* toys in

TEENAGE SPIRIT

Novelist David Bergen is a superb chronicler of the intense adolescent psyche, writes BRIAN BERGMAN

ON A COLD January afternoon three years ago, novelist and teacher David Bergen was walking home from his day job at Winnipeg's Kelvin High School when he spotted a strange girl seated on the railing of the Maryland Bridge, her legs dangling above the Assiniboine River. She was looking forward, and appeared calm on jumping. Pedestrians and cars went by, no one did anything. Bergen approached and managed to grab the girl onto the walkway and put her down as she struggled. He asked two passing girls to run for help to a nearby hospital where, as it turned out, the teenager was a psychiatric patient. "I recall her anger, her defiance, her lack of speech," says Bergen. "It struck me that she was very young and very damaged."

Bergen, 45, never heard what became of the girl he rescued, but she stayed with him in his latest novel, *The Case of Lena S.*, the 17-year-old Winnipegger, and the struggle on the Maryland Bridge is described almost exactly as it occurred. One of five finalists for this year's English Language Guild's General's Fiction award, Bergen's novel revolves around the tortured, and sometimes twisted, relationship between the adolescent Lena/Scholar and the infamous object of her desire, 36-year-old Mason Crane. Bergen, who obviously knows the territory well, manages to plumb the messy, overblown and always intense teenage psyche with both humor and poignancy. The result is one of the most poignant, and ultimately disturbing, novels of the year.

As with Bergen's 1997 collection of short stories, *Sitting Opposite My Brother*, and two novels, *A Year of Lesser* (1986) and *For the Child* (1999), the new book spotlighting the untold human dramas can wreak on those they

profess to love. And once again, Bergen writes with total frankness and attention to the more sordid details of life that may shock some readers. The terms whose/mint The Case of Lena S. are not the Brady Bunch. They casually experiment with oral and anal sex, (in)tolerance is drugs ranging from marijuana to heroin, and often exhibit a conscience that makes an essential nerve.

But they are far from stupid. Mason is an upstart, well-read poet. Lena sees cinema on classic Russian novels and subtle speculations on the sexual problems of their English teacher, Mr. Abramovich. As the teen relationship intensifies, Lena sees men as both a sword and a shield. At one point, we are told that Lena "loved Mason's heart. Because in her innocence she seemed innocent, but that the tenderness and she pushed it away as she looked forward and backward and said, 'Let's—Mason Crane.'"

Bergen is deft at depicting the all-consuming hormones of adolescence. Before Lena arrives on the scene, Mason is visiting an older girl, Siesta Chahal. "Siesta told me," writes Bergen. "It was thick and black and there didn't exist in the world anything more beautiful" (as in the next context, Mason is covering his older brother Danny's jaded girlfriend, especially after she confides that his brother was "invertebrate" and a "pervert," but she enjoyed everything about their sex life. Mason finds her self wondering "what exactly she meant by creative, and if she was so willing, what was she so willing to do?").

In fact, Mason's unbridled sexual longings encompass everyone that his English teacher, his own mother, an attractive woman who is the province of abandoning Mason's father for a wealthy widow. But it's only Lena

he really loves and to whom he remains fiercely loyal even when she shuns him following her suicide attempt. Mason knows Lena spells trouble, but he can't help himself. He has, at least temporarily, spotted her for a true girl.

At first March, the lanky and affable Bergen seems an unlikely source for such explicit fare. Born in the fishing village of Port Edward, B.C., he was the fourth of six children raised in a devout Mennonite household. A musician's son, Bergen spent parts of his childhood in rural Saskatchewan and Calgary before heading to Niverville, Man., 32 km south of Winnipeg, at the age of 12. His upbringing was strict: no movies, no dancing, very little television (Witchy Night on Canada was a happy exception). While he enjoyed playing basketball, Bergen describes himself as a bookish kid who read every thing from "mud crap" to literary classics. He dabbled in writing at a young age, winning the \$1 first prize in a *Grade 7* short story contest—a harbinger of the later, more serious ventures facing Canadian authors.

After high school, Bergen spent two years in a Mennonite bible college in British Columbia where he met his wife and fellow Mennonite, Mary Leeween (they have four children, aged nine to 34). They moved to Winnipeg, where Bergen enrolled at the University of Winnipeg and served on a committee as English teacher. It was about this time Bergen began writing in earnest, though he didn't publish his first short story until age 31. "It's rather a really bad blonnie," he laughs, "so very slow at figuring things out."

Among the authors Bergen counts as influences are Robert Frost, Alice Munro and Garth McCarthy. He also acknowledges naming his "innocent sexual youth" on John Updike. In a newspaper article Bergen wrote a few years ago about fiction and sex, he notes that, with Updike, "there was a feeling of playfulness along with the sense of risk-taking. Sex was sex, simple, the forbidden that often turned our notion." And so it is in Bergen's fictional world. Affairs and seductions tend to end badly, and it's more often a source of tension than joy.

Bergen's parents were impressed with the explicitness of their only fiction, and told him so. It's a subject Bergen discusses with some discretion. "I lost my parents and have a good relationship with them, but they don't understand why I write what I write. There's nothing I can do about that



change what I write for their sake, and of course I won't do that. We've just got to the point where we don't go just. I told them upfront not to read this last book."

Bergen has also travelled a long way from his upbringing when it comes to matters of faith. While he admires the Mennonite ideal of pacifism, Bergen says, "I have trouble with religion. I don't believe the answer to peace or getting along with one's neighbor is God. I see that's where the danger is, and what creates our wars."

A constant challenge for Bergen is finding time to write. With a bustling house life and a full-time job (though he has taken a

leave of absence from teaching this year), he admits whatever moments he can. He often escapes for short periods to various locations—a current favorite is his local cemetery—where he sits in his car and writes in long-handled. At night, after giving his youngest son a bedtime bath, Bergen will often lie down beside his first 20-minute nap and then rise to do a couple of hours of writing on his home computer. "There's a certain glow when I finally do get alone in a room," he says. "Target my person, I just write."

One of the ironies about Bergen is the contrast between his domestic life and the grim themes of his fiction. As he sits in his kitchen, having just fed his children and sent them off to school (his wife is a student at the University of Winnipeg, Bergen is asked if he ever considered writing a novel about a happily married father of four. "That would be a pretty boring, wouldn't it?" he replies. "I do get the sense readers these days want happier stories. It may just be our world, and they may well be right. But I've had parents come up with one." Unless then, we'll have to make do with the equine gloom of Bergen's imagination.



In the writer's fictional world, affairs and adulteries tend to end badly, and sex is more often a source of tension than joy

SNAKES AND LADDERS

Sturla Gunnarsson bridges film's twin solitudes, writes BRIAN D. JOHNSON

IT'S SUNDAY NIGHT and here's your choice of made-in-Canada TV movies. On CBC there's a serving of holiday trouble called *The Man Who Saved Christmas*, a wartime fable with Scroggie's Jason Alexander wearing a beret in a fake America frayed with fake snow. And on CTV there's *100 Days in the Jungle*, a gritty hostage-taking drama featuring Canadian actors being dragged through the real eyes of a real rain forest crawling with bugs, snakes, spiders, and scorpions. It seems a simple choice, between discursive realism and biblical schlock. But Toronto-based director Sturla Gunnarsson may have a hard time deciding which one to watch with his family. He made both of them, and they're airing in dramatic size slot, at 9 p.m., on Dec. 15.

"I know what I'm going to do," says Gunnarsson's wife, Judy. "I'm going to watch *100 Days in the Jungle* and flip to *The Man Who Saved Christmas* during the commercials." But Sturla points out that she may have to fight for the remote with their children—Mays, 12, and Ann, 15, have small roles in the Christmas movie.

While both dramas are based on true stories, they take very different approaches to the truth. And they represent the twin solitudes of Canadian filmmaking, which is split between a thriving service industry that churns out American fare and a struggling sector of indigenous production.

The Man Who Saved Christmas tells the story of A.C. Gilbert, the New Haven toy mogul who created the Erector set, agreed to convert his factory into a munitions plant during the First World War—then persuaded Congress to reverse its assembly plan to "cancel" Christmas. It's more than a Christmas fable. "It's patriotic," Gunnarsson notes. "It's an anti-military-making movie of American TV." The real Gilbert read with "a fair degree of self-interest," he adds. "A Canadian approach to the story would ask what's in it for him, and you'd end up with a more complex character—a guy arguing out of self-interest to do something for the greater good."

On the other hand, *100 Days in the Jungle*



Waking Asahi, the director faced torrential rain, an earthquake and venousous wildlife

gle a "very much in a Canadian tradition," Gunnarsson notes. "It's a story that's long in the making and doesn't try to make them up to some ideal." The movie dramatizes the harrowing ordeal of eight Japanese workers in Ecuador—seven Japanese-Americans and one American—who were kidnapped by Colombian guerrillas

on Sept. 11, 1999 and held hostage for 100 days in the Amazon jungle. Michael Riley (*Power Play*) stars as the brooding, tacit leader, who emerges as the hostages' unofficial leader. A no-nonsense Nicholas Campbell (*Die With Me*) plays the ransom negotiator who helps win their freedom.

"It's a film about negotiation," says Gun-



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Television >

narrator. "It's deeply an American, and I'm proud of that. It's not about evil brown people. The kidnappers are not objectionable. They're brutal, but that's a humanity to them. The *Man Who Saved Christmas* speaks more to the sentiment in the United States today, where the President believes there are evil people and good people and you can conduct foreign policy based on that belief." Sean O'Brien's script for *100 Days* was clearly based on extensive interviews with the former hostages. In addition, "because it is an American film the true story becomes the jumping-off point to tell a fictional story. There is an entirely different narrative philosophy. It involves a leap here."

The Los Angeles born Gunnarsson, who immigrated with his family on a flighter at the age of 7, is one of Canada's most accomplished producers. A hard-knock artist who brings a strong voice to his work—when given the chance. He received an Oscar nomination for his very first feature, *After the Air* (1982), a documentary about executive branch. Since then his films have won 10 Genies, five Genies and an International Emmy. His dramatic features range from the richly evocative *Jack A Long Journey* (1996), based on the Holocaust Martyr novel, to the whimsical comedy *Rare Birds*, which won four Genies. *Jack A Long Journey* should be a strong contender at this year's Genies. Gunnarsson tends to bring a provocative sense of realism to his filmmaking. Right at the heart of dramatic features he's directed are human as true stories. And their subjects include a *Thelma* (Mickey Rourke), *The Diana Highway Story*, a true story of a young man (The *Diary of a Young Man*) and a 17-year-old who has his mother and grandmother murdered (Sweden).

But to subsidize his Canadian film, Gunnarsson works as a producer for his American productions. And it's a difficult line of work. Canadian movies tend to get made against all odds and uncomfortable circumstances, while American productions are brisk and businesslike. The independent producers of *100 Days* or the *Jungle* agreed to hire Gunnarsson last year after four months of deliberation. The producers of *The Man Who Saved Christmas* hired him at the end of a conference call just two hours after his agent e-mailed him the script. Four weeks later he was shooting the movie in Toronto. "I was on a list," he explains. "Los Angeles is a city of lists. You have to be approved by the network and the star. Little by little, the person that comes has made his way to the top."

Gunnarsson was paid \$230,000 for three months' work on *The Man Who Saved Christmas*, more than he received for directing two years ago. Rare Birds. Midway through the shoot, a new director joined the crew, and Gunnarsson learned that the person taking over of Sean O'Brien's script would be a Canadian. "I was called to other people who have made period films for networks," says Gunnarsson, "and they say 90 per cent of the conversation is about makeup and hair. American producers tend to be more interested in talking about the look. Canadian producers want to talk about the story."

Although *The Man Who Saved Christmas* is not between 1968 and 1918, the producers didn't want it to look like a period piece. "We called it a period piece," says Gunnarsson. "American distributors and producers are terrified of history. They want to reach viewers from an initial perspective as possible, and they want nothing to stand in the way of that." The director insists, how-

A gritty Canadian drama and some U.S. Yuletide schmaltz, both directed by Gunnarsson, play in the same time slot on Dec. 15



The person taking over of *Alma's* script made more than the director

proved by the network and the star. Little by little, the person that comes has made his way to the top."

Gunnarsson's next project will take him back to his homeland. He's planning to do *Roots: A New Beginning*, a \$15 million Canadian production. Set in the 18th century, "it's a challenging and a double movie," he says. "Lots of several hands. But it is a modern re-examination of the two myths—the impulse to tell what we feel is understood. The Vikings were the original people." Now that *Gladiator*, *Crucifixion*, *Tiger*, *Held*, *Dragons* and *Lord of the Rings* have made Broadway, *Roots* is back, with *Roots* Gunnarsson hopes to "make a movie that will get seen by a lot of people." Indeed, a long way to go to make the Great Canadian Movie, but then he's just retracing the steps of Canada's first settlers—an intriguing Viking chasing his roots.

over, that he believes the producers, and the staff, involved in shooting a \$9-million network movie in 20 days. "You have all the amenities—the assistant, the trailer, a crane whenever you want a crane. But you're working in a system where it's not the director's voice that's speaking through the film."

The *100 Days* production, which cost almost half as much as the CBS film, was a less benign experience. In Costa Rica, the filmmakers had to contend with tropical rains, an earthquake and vicious wildlife. Pigs were staked on the perimeter of the set to ward off snakes, while armed guards prevented it from rain life. Life was also, in the post-9/11 climate, the producers couldn't fly in armor for the movie's gunfights, so they ended up procuring M-16s from the local residents. The crew's biggest brush with danger, however, came when Campbell got caught in a rip tide while bodyguarding.

Gunnarsson, who has shot films in Mexico, South Africa and India, has learned to make himself at home in foreign settings—even an American city fabricated in Toronto. But he's been unable to make a Canadian movie in his hometown. His last attempt was *Mother* (1996), which was due to be shot in Toronto. In 1995 the "Canadian Screen" Conservatives took over the province and quickly named the Ontario Film Development Corporation from a funding agency for local films to a service provider for U.S. productions. *Mother* (1996) was a U.S. production. *Mother* (1996) was a U.S. production. "It's now virtually impossible to shoot a Canadian movie in Toronto," says Gunnarsson. "In the country's biggest city, there's no provincial support."

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CLOSINGNOTES



MUSIC | 60

'Tis the season for jingle-bell rock: more classic Christmas carols to original holiday tunes, movies set back to the Scrooges. And Alan Henricks, the Overstated Ladies and Sarah McLachlan offer up some seasonal cheer. Even Canadian country group Quintette has gotten into the spirit.



PEOPLE | 12

Eliah Wood keeps his head in the 18-year-old actor's business, graced by a special real life from Middle Earth.



Listings | To work magic

Wine Museum
Until Feb. 17
The Bayview Museum is celebrating Mexican art, including that of Diego Rivera, the famous mural painter. Museum and husband of artist Paula Robson. Calgary.

The Heliocenter
Dec. 14 to Jan. 2
Fifty-four historical paintings of Canada company members, 24 children and 140 portraits of people in the Heliocenter. Toronto.

One Magic Christmas
Dec. 21 to Jan. 2
A series of events and shows and even artists' shows. Children of the Sea Annual. Toronto.

Exhibit with Maclean's
March 18 to 19
Join the Maclean's Spring Festival. Toronto.

Exhibition
Dec. 25 to Jan. 2
A series of events and shows and even artists' shows. Children of the Sea Annual. Toronto.

Science | An international coup for a fishy situation

Amadeo Vincent's discovery with his book began when he learned that it is the males of the species who get pregnant. For a woman, what's not to love? Vincent, an biologist who holds the marine conservation research chair in the Fisheries Centre at University of British Columbia, was the first to study sea horses underwater. It was a challenge considering the creature (30 cm in length) is experts in camouflage. "I spent sometimes up to nine hours a day, bobbing around in the shallow water with sea horses," says Vincent. "It's a bit like marine archaeology—they're slow in it. It's a very graceful, beautiful ballet."

Vincent, director of Project Seahorse, recently returned from Santiago, Chile, where

Vincent convinced 300 countries to control trade and protect sea horses.

THE BEASLES
For more about the international Project Seahorse visit www.projectseahorse.org



150 countries agreed to control sea horse trade under a new international convention to protect them and their fish. Over the past 50 years, Vincent's team discovered a third of the 25 million fish a year in 75 countries. (Canada imports them but doesn't fish in only population off of Bismarck.) While not used for food, live sea horses are used in aquariums, and dried specimens are sold to Asian chains and curiosities. The biggest market is Asian traditional medicine, where sea horses are staples for treatment of all kinds from asthma to impotence. The trade controls are designed to respect the economic and medicinal value of the fishery while reversing an alarming decline in some populations. Vincent likes to think that some unanimous support was a victory for science. But the sea horse did its part, too. "Their names," he says, "didn't help!"

—JAN MARGOLIS



Review | Santa's making tracks, both naughty and nice

For recording artists, Christmas is no picnic. Think of the gift lists—do you cover the standards and go local to head with the likes of Perry Como or do you write new material and risk irrelevance? Both approaches are twinned in Neil Young's new compilation album, *Maybe This Christmas*. There's too much attitude (the CD starts with a song for Ben Harper singing that Santa "got too far out of control"), but Ron Sexsmith's off-kilter is hilarious and the Sarah McLachlan-Bernadette Lurie collaboration on *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* is a fully delight.

Possibly the most useful release this year is Lee Ann Womack's *The Season for Romance*. With classic tunes of the cozy fire variety, the CD is a departure from her own roots. She has the sense to work with good musicians and, if the arrangements verge on ornate, the playings worth paying attention to. Tantalizing is not quite the word for Santa's *Get Mojo*. But the collection of mostly Canadian blues artists from Elliott's Records boasts some excellent performances and fun lyrics such as Jack de Keyser's, "By the eighth day of Christmas, the wind can feel like a boozy-lonely man." British Seton's doggie *Waggin' Christmas* finds the Sinner's Song Cats' Tomlinson re-

interpreting holiday standards rockabilly style. It risks cliché but is saved by certain songs like a duet with Anne-Margaret on Baby's Gold Outside. *Quarantine*, on the other hand, could have tossed off a collection of Christmas favourites but the Chieftans' country group, known for their superb harmonies, took the harder path. *I See a Star* is almost all new material. And it's tremendously strong. As in previous albums, each woman takes a turn writing and singing lead. Style and sensibilities vary, but each song has the Chieftans' vocal stamp.

From the classical end, two Canadian groups have produced albums worth listening to. In 2006, Toronto's *Avadita* (a weekly-enjoyed big-eareds) with a collection of Noël and Christmas songs by Mass Amoreux Chaperone. This year, the ensemble follows it up with the equally lovely *Volume 2*. Alternatively, make no mistake, a small Vancouver choir is unique in its approach—there's no conductor. The group selects the music collaboratively. CBC released the choir's *nativity* which draws on sources from the 9th to the 20th century. The choir is flexible enough to carry itself and the result is a song, clear and imaginative.

MICHAEL MAZUR

Art | The search for love

It's not surprising that seven U.S. president Bill Clinton has a red, white and blue painting hanging in his office. What's odd is the piece was created by a young American artist. The acrylic artwork, titled *I Love You*, is by a Canadian painter and is actually pretty smooth. The top half of the painting is red with the words "I love you" scrawled repeatedly across the canvas. The bottom portion is blue and the same phrase is written once in white block letters. The work by Toronto artist Kelly Hollett, is relatively straightforward. Now a red-up with Clinton is more complicated.

The painting was originally part of Hollett's *I Love You* series which was first shown in Toronto in April 2004. The show then travelled to Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Four months later and the Clintons were scheduled to attend the opening. Hollett, like all, decided to present the political painting to the high-profile duo. Under protest, the Clintons missed the show and Hollett, who still wanted them to have the piece, sent the work to Hillary Rodham Clinton's office in New York. Five months later, after not receiving a note of recognition, Hollett later placed the canvas. The 30" x 24" composition took, it seemed, gone missing. As it turned out, it had not been the canvas before his wife saw it. To avoid an ethical dilemma for the canvas, Hollett redid the work to fit above and in new hang in his Chappaqua, N.Y. home office.

Staying in her Toronto studio left with her two pet chickens, Betty and Pete, Hollett laughs while remembering the confusion. "I'd wanted to do a blue sky, white clouds, a blue sky, white clouds," she says. After Martin's visit, the canvas was shown in New York City in September and is now at Toronto's Leminist Gallery until Dec. 23.

Hollett, 41, decided to explore the theme of love in his work after her mother died three years ago. "I started questioning who would be without this unconditional love," she says. "My mom was my whole life. When she died I actually had to create after my own." Hollett, who is single, has an obsession with love, "those who can't do, track," she says. "Those who aren't in love want to explore it because they want to know how to do it." And while she hasn't signed the whole love thing out yet, Hollett did finally get her thank you note—handwritten by the former president himself.

HELEN BUTTERY

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People | Keeping it real

Elijah Wood really is a comic as a hobby. The actor, who played Frodo Baggins in the 2001 megahit *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, has huge eyes that are blue, blue. His dim, 5-foot-7 frame is clad in a well-worn T-shirt and jeans. Hobbits don't smoke cigarettes, though (They prefer pipes.) Nor would they ever refuse to eat while being interviewed on the basis of being impolite. In fact, Wood, 21, is so courteous, attentive and sincere it's unsettling. He's not the already-jaded young movie star who is bored by interviews and fame. Wood, a child actor who made the transition into adult films relatively easily,

less, came right into your eyes, lean forward as his vast and unfurled every grace. Yikes.

In between gigs and posing his movie, *Triforce*—a coming-of-age story about a 17-year-old going off to college—Wood is completely relaxed. He has, however, had to go to his home more for the media and fan frenzy that is whirling around the second installment of the J.R.R. Tolkien trilogy—*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*—that will be released on Dec. 18. "I live my life in a quite unique normal way," says Wood. "The attention, I let that be its own thing. I do what I want to do and go where I want to go. I keep it separate."

Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Wood now

lives (with his mom) in Los Angeles.

He started in film at the age of eight with the role of Video Game Boy #1 in *Back in the Future Part II*. Now he's landing lead roles in films such as *Edward Scissorhands*, *As I Lay Dying*. And even though Wood will forever be the face of the huge *Lord of the Rings* industry, he isn't worried about being pigeonholed. "It didn't bother me because it is definitely a character accepted in fantasy," he says. He was, however, perfectly cast at the end of the interview, with his chair for a hug. How very hobbit. **AMY CAMERON**

Books | Tinker, tailor—the irreplaceable Donald Smith

Everyone in Canada has heard the name *Stonewall*—an impressive array of artists, poets and scientists led it—and everyone has seen Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathmore and Mount Royal. But few, probably, have connected their local peck with one of Canadian history's iconic photos. That white-haired gent with the stethoscope, just about to drive in the last spike linking the railway lines we're driving on? That's him. As Donna McDonald's dense biography and illustrated illustrated makes clear, Smith (1836 to 1914) was one of the pivotal figures of 19th-century Canada. For leader, frontier politician and philanthropist, he was significant as much for his diplomatic missions—John A. Macdonald sent him to talk to Louis Riel in 1885—as for his employable financial backing for the CPR.



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OUR CANADIAN HAT TRICK

When it comes to *really* looking silly, well...seen a guy wear a toque lately?

AN WL For an overseas space's perspective, I thought for the Canadian reader: "Water's here. Now move our basketball line!" You know what I'm talking about. Maybe you've even felt the way I do. Last winter is a pretty strange, unusual season. I simply refuse to embrace it. I don't do. I've sneaked the kids over to Sudbury, just so I can avoid those Sunday afternoons that hockey days get all wacky about as dry ice hockey melts on a frozen pond. But then I'm getting antsy about the worst of it: one of these days someone will, I'm going to have to actually set up an foot on my ownland. There I'll have no choice. Years from now, some embarrassing Ph.D. candidate will realize what I and my brother implicitly understood, if you want to get to the root of this country's self-image problem, one place to look is us. Because, if you ask me, it's pretty hard to tell you've got the jelly to compete with the Japanese when you have to spend an month a year wearing something that resembles the woolly covering on top of your head.

Let's be clear here: I am not exactly *lame*. I'm not even the fidge, the U2 guitarist who, I suspect, is actually using his *lame* as the last stop on a tour to demolish his studio. When I pull my muscle on, I don't look embarrassed and dangerous—I just look embarrassed, kinda baffled, as if wondering at precisely what moment it was that I became Doug Maki. Like everyone over age 40, I can still remember ask and when we were young. If you went to a sports event or a music store, you'd see thousands of them. On the television or movie screen—Steve McQueen in his *Wanted* role, David Lee Roth as a certain kind of *Wanted* or *House of Blue Leaves*, the *Armageddon* guys—there was a sign of a certain date. Because, "let's face it, it's easy to evolve a little flake" (you're, say, Lee Majors in *M Squad* running around after badasses in a duds with a cruise in it) as close as your toe line.

My question is how would he look middle of February trudging 45 degrees up Sackville Street in Halifax into a Harvard

divided into two: their flesh from beneath. Better yet, let's see how actress Mary McCormack's Belling looks with his poetry hand crafted into a tongue. Hard to know what it was: the mushrooms-like shape Cassini's rational headgear gives the camera or the baffled way the eyes stare out from below the edge of the material. Maybe it's the muffled way everything sounds when you're wearing one, but you've got a really nice ear infection. The bug problem, I'd argue, is what it does to your face, sometimes battering it down like badger fur, just as often sculpting it into a head full of Colosseum overls that make the cicadas react to her not when you survival your noggin at a business lunch.

Yet what the heck are the options if you're a man in Canada? Women can go couture and still stay warm. But the ones I know will me those car bands aren't on for serious media guys like me and certainly make a man look like he should be decked out in bells and bag shoes cowering around under the Big Top. C'mon, let's be honest: only Pierre Trudeau ever really looked good in a fur.



Song Motenue, Canadian style artist

If you wear one of those Row Rebaghan poor-boy caps, the caps have a tendency to want to frisk you for roofer. And those fleece jobs with the bag ear flaps seem, to me, to hint at an affinity for fire and/or harming small animals.

Personally, I don't wear a haladava because I am not a member of the WWF, a small bullter or boxer on robbing a KFC outlet. I've yet to see a man who doesn't look like a jerk in one of those Cold War Soviet diaphs. Just like, in my opinion, you can play throat guitar in a punk band and still look pretty effeminate wearing any headgear that must be tied on under the chin.

Social history has it that the hat a man wears on his head identifies his place or function in society. So, I can't be all good conscience when an Indiana Jones style fedora (or swashbuckling CEO's only), a 10-gallon cowboy hat (gotta brand cattle or at least sing like Jan Tyson) or maybe a ball cap—even if it is an forwards-facing all-legance to a particular sports franchise fairly cool if you actually play on the team).

Which lives one... where? We are not, of course, the only country with a goofy national trait. The prize goes to those people, Aussie Aussies who came up with one: emerging with babbling coos to keep the bees away. There's the U.S. with, I needn't say, it's new quite the thing for mid-size animals to yrlie about in-dico are pump larks. But how does dis help when I actually am managing through the hat drooves? Lord knows, I've tried to be innovative before dealing with the winter headgear quarry. My heart breaks a little every time I think about those moments the fashion gods so often use to find to show some one.

By now, I'm in the out-of-focus, I would love to say that never again will I succumb to the tyranny of the tug-of-war's three strengthlessness against the world without me adding to inventory one thing out the door! But what's a Canadian guy to do? A heptathlete? A comedian? Can't my kids say I should try one of those pirate-style 60-mgs. Don't they understand it's cold out there! And the only way to carry that off is if you've got a feel-mounted parrot perched upon your shoulder. Which, come to think of it, might be a whole lot less demanding than the alternative.

Halifax, Nova Scotia's John De Mott has never lived down wearing a newsboy's bowed hat with ear flaps for an entire winter.

vinyl bags (average pounds) 20
 water hoses (average length) 40
 bicycle wheels (average hours to build) 50

the breathless side again, gricklow

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